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THE
IMPERIAL CAPTIVES:
A
TRAGEDY.

As it is Acted

By His Majesty's Servants.

By Mr. MOTTLEY.



LONDON,

Printed for T. JAUNCEY at the Angel without *Temple-Bar*, W. MEADOWS at the Black-Bull in *Cornhill*, and J. ROBERTS near the *Oxford Arms* in *Warwick-Lane*. 1720. (Price 1s. 6d.)

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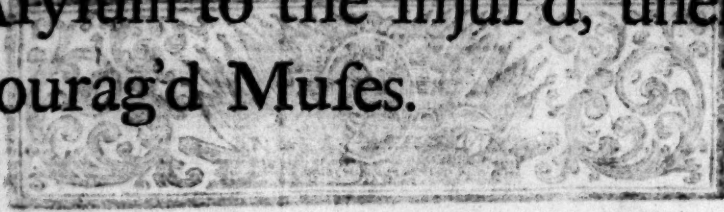
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Woolwich Lane 1710. (Price 1s. 6d.)



THE Examples of Great
Men prevail upon the Pub-
lick; and the Pieces of this
Nature are in the present
The Right Honourable the
Ld Viscount Castlemain.

MY LORD,
MEN of Worth, Figure,
and Reputation, have
in all Ages been e-
steem'd the properest Per-
sons

sons to grant an honourable
Asylum to the injur'd, unen-
courag'd Muses.



THE Examples of Great
Men prevail upon the Pub-
lick ; and tho Pieces of this
Nature are in the present
Degeneracy of Taste, and
Hurry of Business, (among
Persons whose Judgment on-
ly centers with their Inte-
rest) reckon'd unprofitable
and impertinent Trifles ; yet
when cherish'd under the In-
dulgence of some Noble Per-
sonage,

sonage, they revive their
sinking Reputation, and make
those People who were be-
fore so morosely incurious,
as to despise the Labours
of Ingenuity, without look-
ing on them, out of shame
ambitious to imitate the com-
mendable Pattern of their
Superiors.

IT is for those excellent
Qualities that render a No-
bleman eminent, that give
him a greater Lustre than
his Titles, that I have pre-
sum'd

sum'd to challenge your
Lordship's Patronage.

WHATEVER my Success
has been in this Perfor-
mance, I must confess I had
some Value for it, before I
could have a Thought of
prefixing your Lordship's
Name to it ; and 'tis as cer-
tain, that I must depend up-
on your Lordship's Candour,
to excuse the many Im-
perfections of a Juvenile
Pen.

I AM very unwilling to own how much I am indebted to the *French* in this Poem, lest it should take from that little Reputation I may have got by it; but the concealing of a Theft, is an Aggravation of the Crime.

A DEDICATION is an honest Attempt of the Writer to celebrate the Merit of his Patron: but, as it too often happens, his good Inclination is lost in the Badness
a of

x: *The Dedication.*

of the Performance, and
whilst he weakly endeavours
to do him Justice, is guilty
of the greatest Injustice to
him; Conscious of my own
Inability for such a Task, I
shall only beg leave to assure
your Lordship, how much I
desire the Honour of sub-
scribing myself.

YOUR LORDSHIP'S

Most Obliged, and

Most Devoted

Humble Servant,

JOHN MOTTLEY.



PROLOGUE;

Written by Mr. BECKINGHAM.



*No this Projecting, this Censorious Age,
So many diff'rent Schemes your Minds
engage,*

*You've scarce left room for any on the Stage.
Whilst Pulpits war, and Stock-jobbers debate,
How doubtful is the slighted Poet's Fate?
His idle Plans you carelessly survey,
And find but scanty Interest from a Play;
For poor Returns he plies his tortur'd Brain,
And great Examples swell the Scene in vain.*

*Is this the Land of Freedom and of Sense?
And shall the pining Muse be banish'd hence?
Once your fair Fav'rite, now discourag'd lie,
And British Poetry in Britain die?
Shall then the Tragick Bard unheeded tell
How AMMON conquer'd, or how CÆSAR fell?*

*How TYRANTS by their own Injustice bleed,
And happy Realms have been by great DELIVERERS
freed,*

*Just Parallels of Times before you cast,
To teach the present—while he draws the past?*

*Recover with your Taste your antient Fame,
Nor let what was your Glory be your Shame;
Let it not now reproach you to have made
Those Pens that us'd to celebrate—upbraid,*

*In spite of Disadvantages like these,
Our Author yet has humble Hopes to please;
By proper Strokes he studies to impart
Instructive Morals to the generous Heart.*

*If to Despotick Sway you scorn to bow,
He bids you shew your just Abhorrence now:
His Captives—(if Distress commands a Tear)
Can never sue in vain for Mercy here,
If he desires, account it not his Pride,
That standard Judgement should his Cause decide;
His Faults he owns, if Men of Sense condemn,
For Wounds are Wounds of Honour given by them,
Attend impartial to his honest Claim,
Applaud with Justice, and with Justice blame.*

Be forc'd to bear my Lovers sigh in vain,
Have Power to resist, but not to shun their Pain?



My Oath was rash, — but since I chanc'd to take it,
Pity my Case, — I'm Play-house High and Blood.

EPILOGUE;

By MR. CHRISTOPHER BULLOCK.

Spoken by Miss STONE.

OUR Author just now whisper'd in my Ear,
My Play and I are surely damu'd, my Dear,
Unless, my Charmer, you will now engage,
And save me from the dreadful Criticks Rage;
By Way of Epilogue, beg they'd excuse
The first Attempt of my unskilful Muse.

I straight comply'd; and ev'n without more urging
Swore that I would succeed — or die a Virgin.
Now, what a Story would that be to tell!
Did Play-house Damsel e'er lead Apes in Hell?
What, die a Maid! and in this loving City,
You cruel Fellows, would it not be pity?
Now when my Charms might captivate a Nation,
Now when I'm just arriv'd to — Speculation!

Be

Be forc'd to hear my Lovers sigh in vain,
 Have Pow'r to wish, but not assuage their Pain?
 My Youth and Beauty sicken with the Spleen!
 Just in the wishing Crisis of Fifteen!
 Pray spare our Poet—Come,—you must be good:
 Pity my Case,—I'm Play-house Flesh and Blood,
 My Oath was rash,—but since I chanc'd to take it,
 Nor Beau, nor Critick ~~Per~~ shall make me break it,
 Therefore you Monsters, that make Girls afraid,
 Who ev'ry Morning must devour a Maid,
 You Men of Sense, and you sweet-scented Beaux,
 To you who Charm with Wit, and you with Clothes,
 To all I speak, that ever hope to find
 I to their Wishes may not prove unkind,
 Must to our Author's Faults be very—very blind.



Dramatis Personae.

M E N.

| | | |
|-------------|---|--------------------------------|
| Mr. Dicky | — | Nabal, Attendant on Tarsamond. |
| Mr. Robert | — | Algar, Minister of State. |
| Mr. Egerton | — | Hemeric, his younger Son. |
| Mr. Rann | — | Tarsamond, his eldest Son. |
| Mr. Quin | — | Gaspard, King of the Nubians. |



| | | |
|--------------|---|------------------------|
| Mrs. Gifford | — | The Empress |
| Mrs. Seymour | — | Eudora, her Daughter. |
| Mrs. Bullock | — | Sophonin. |
| Mrs. Guitel | — | Thyane, her Confidant. |

Guards, Officers, and Attendants.

SCENE, the Palace of Gaspard in Carthage.

Dramatis Personæ.

M E N.

| | | |
|--------------------------------------------------|------|----------------------|
| <i>Genferic</i> , King of the <i>Vandals</i> . | —— | Mr. <i>Quint</i> . |
| <i>Thrasimond</i> , his eldest Son. | —— | Mr. <i>Ryan</i> . |
| <i>Honoric</i> , his younger Son. | —— | Mr. <i>Egleton</i> . |
| <i>Aspar</i> , Minister of State. | —— — | Mr. <i>Boheme</i> . |
| <i>Narbal</i> , Attendant on <i>Thrasimond</i> . | —— | Mr. <i>Diggs</i> . |

W O M E N.

| | | |
|---------------------------------|------|-----------------------|
| The Empress | —— — | Mrs. <i>Giffard</i> . |
| <i>Eudofia</i> , her Daughter. | —— | Mrs. <i>Seymour</i> . |
| <i>Sophronia</i> . | —— | Mrs. <i>Bullock</i> . |
| <i>Justina</i> , her Confident. | —— | Mrs. <i>Gulick</i> . |

Guards, Officers, and Attendants.

SCENE, the Palace of *Genferic* in *Carthage*.



THE
IMPERIAL CAPTIVES.



ACT I. SCENE I.

Eudofia and Aspar.

Eud.



OW long, malicious Instrument of
Power,
Say, for thou know'st the Tyrant's
Counsels well;
How long will thy insulting Master
hold

In *Carthaginian* Bonds great *Cesar's* House?
His impious Fortune's Boast, and *Rome's* Disgrace!
Unshock'd can he survey a guilty Reign
Blacken'd with Perfidy, and stain'd with Blood?
Can he behold the Empress and myself

B

Sink

Sink with the Weight of these detested Chains,
Nor Honour, nor Humanity upbraid

~~His treach'rous Arms, and violated Faith?~~

Say, subtle Minister of that proud Prince,

Say, *Aspar*, yet does *Genferic* relent?

What may we hope? or stands he still resolv'd

To wage with Justice, and with Nature War,

And meditating still continu'd Mischiefs,

Add to our Woes, and pride him in his Crimes?

Asp. To make those Chains sit lighter on your Mind,
Lose the Remembrance of your Birth, and *Rome*;
Resign with Patience to the Will of Fate,
For fix'd as Fate are *Genferic's* Decrees:
From Patience, not from him, expect Redress.

Eud. Patience! the sovereign Balm to lesser Woes,
But useless to *Eudofia's*! Think, cruel *Aspar*,
Can I be patient in this abject State,
Nor hope again to see my Native *Rome*?
Imperial Rome! where my great Ancestors
Have led, to grace their Triumphs, vanquish'd Kings,
Chain'd and attending on their Chariot-Wheels:
Will Heaven consent, within the Walls of *Carthage*,
That *Cesar's* Daughter be confin'd a Slave?
No, tho its Eye seems winking for a while
It can't approve the Guilt that it permits;
Nor longer shall thy Master's faithless Pride
Mock at the tardy Thunder unchastiz'd,
But feel redoubled Vengeance from that Hand,
That Power, his Infidelity despis'd;
For all the Ravage of his barb'rous Arms,
For our harsh Bonds, for Nations Rights infring'd,
Sack'd Cities, and depopulated Lands.

Asp. Madam, regardless of a Captive's Mein,
The Empress' and your own unbridled Rage
Breaks forth too oft in Language suiting ill —

Eud. Ha! suiting ill! What suits it ill with these,
These Bonds, to murmur at the Tyrant Hand

That

The IMPERIAL CAPTIVES.

3

That puts 'em on? No, *Aspar*, thou'rt deceiv'd,
My Mother will be *Cesar's* Widow still,
True to her Blood, and every where herself:
Should Fortune once more change, or Fate relent,
She in her turn may triumph, in her turn
Rise (from Captivity) again to Empire,
And shew thy haughty Lord, and all the World,
What distant Awe *Rome's* Empress may command.
Is there a Chief renown'd for manly Daring,
So deaf to Glory, or to Woman's Wrongs,
That will not at th' Alarm our Fetters sound,
From shameful Inactivity arise,
To vindicate the Cause of injur'd Majesty?

Asp. Madam, you rail, but by my Master's Fortune
It seems full plain, that Heaven thinks otherwise
Than your vain Hopes suggest: but henceforth,
Madam,

I would advise you to restrain this Phrenzy,
Or you may find more reason to complain.
But here's the Prince; already has he mov'd
The King in your behalf, of him you'll know
His Father's last Resolves, and his Success.

[Exit *Aspar*.]

Enter *Thrasimond* and *Narbal*.

Thr. Oh my *Eudofia*! Oh my Father!

Eud. Enough, my Lord, I see what we must hope;
The cruel *Genferic* is known too well.

Thr. Why, why, ye Gods! of him must I complain,
My rigid, deaf, inexorable Father!
Believe me, thou much-lov'd, unhappy Maid!
I spoke, I labour'd strongly in your Cause,
Urg'd him with all the Violence of Grief
That Love could utter, or your Wrongs inspire;
Urg'd him by all th' indissoluble Tyes
Of Honour, Force of Vows, and Faith of Kings:

In vain, to move his Pity, did I plead
 Your Sex, the due Regard that Sex does claim,
 Your House, your Country, ruin'd by his Arms;
 Weak Motives all! yet all but that chaste Flame
 Which keeps thy Godlike Image ever here,
 Did I employ to move the stubborn King.

Eud. Farewel then every Dawn of future Hope,
 Since *Thrasimond* could plead, but plead in vain.

Oh Son too worthy thy remorseless Sire!
 On cruel *Maximus* to seek Revenge,
 Why did the injur'd Empress fondly court
 A false Ally in thy more cruel Father?

Or if it was decreed his Hand alone
 Should be the Means of our Destruction, why
 Has erring Fate made thee the Tyrant's Son?

Thr. Is this, ungenerous Princess! this *Eudofia*,
 That once indulgent, tender-hearted Maid?

Roll back, ye Hours, that saw our early Loves,
 And witness'd to our Vows, when first I came
 Hostage of Peace, from *Genferic* to *Rome*;

Tell my forgetful Fair she is unkind,
 My Father's Treatment to resent on me.

Could not a Lover's tributary Heart,
 Hard Lot! atone the Error of my Birth?

But why do I dispute with Fate, or Thee,
 When such a Train of Circumstances join
 To bar my Wishes, and oppose my Joy?

Eud. Alas! what threatening Cloud of farther Ills
 Can this sad Mystery of Grief portend?

Tell me, my Lord, can I have more to fear?

Thr. Why dost thou ask? Thy Bonds, thy Mother's
 Bonds,

Are both the Foes to *Thrasimond*, and Love.

The Captive Empress! thence is my Despair,

Can she look back upon the black Account

Of one continued Scene of adverse Fate,

Of Wrongs on Wrongs, and complicated Woes,

And

The IMPERIAL CAPTIVES.

And *Genferic* the Cause? Will she approve
Alliance with the Son? No, there I'm lost.

Eud. Ill do you judge; my Mother is a *Roman*,
Too noble to be blind to Worth like thine;
Wrong'd as she is, she weighs with Justice still,
As well thy Virtues, as thy Father's Crimes:
Nay, in her utmost Bitterness of Soul,
When her revolving Sorrows bear upon her,
Rise fresh to Thought, with aggravated Horror,
When she complains of *Genferic* and Fate,
With Joy have I observ'd her Griefs forbear
To rank the Son of *Genferic* with her Foes.

Thr. And how could I deserve this wond'rous
Goodness?

Eud. Is there not cause? When thy insidious Father
Reeking with Guilt, and hot with human Gore,
Spread Devastation thro the Streets of *Rome*,
By Fire and Sword made Conquests terrible,
Then did she see my *Thrasimond* stand forth
To curb th' unruly Insolence of Victory,
And pitying that Imperial City's Fate,
Grant an Asylum to its guiltless Sons.

Thr. But what does this avail my hopeless Love?

Eud. These Benefits she knows, to these she adds
A nearer, nobler Goodness than them all:
Since Captives here, with what industrious Pity
You labour'd with your Father for our Freedom,
(Mercy, tho fruitless, valuable still!)
Propose, deserving Prince, your own Reward.

Thr. Tempt me not, Princess, what I now must ask,
To claim profanely as my Merit's Due,
'Tis Height of Sin, Impiety in Love:
To Beauty, as to Heaven, its Votaries dare
No farther than in modest Hopes aspire.

Eud. Then, *Thrasimond*, hope on, and be as blest,
As, witness for me Heaven, *Eudofia* wishes
In happier Times, she may have power to make thee.

Thr.

In vain, to move his Pity, did I plead
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As well thy Virtues, as thy Father's Crimes:
Nay, in her utmost Bitterness of Soul,
When her revolving Sorrows bear upon her,
Rise fresh to Thought, with aggravated Horror,
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To rank the Son of *Genferic* with her Foes.

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Spread Devastation thro the Streets of *Rome*,
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A nearer, nobler Goodness than them all:
Since Captives here, with what industrious Pity
You labour'd with your Father for our Freedom,
(Mercy, tho fruitless, valuable still!)
Propose, deserving Prince, your own Reward.

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To claim profanely as my Merit's Due,
'Tis Height of Sin, Impiety in Love:
To Beauty, as to Heaven, its Votaries dare
No farther than in modest Hopes aspire.

Eud. Then, *Thrasimond*, hope on, and be as blest,
As, witness for me Heaven, *Eudofia* wishes
In happier Times, she may have power to make thee.

Thr.

Thr. Well, well, dost thou reprove my sluggish
Genius,

So slow to teach my willing Heart the Means.

T' assure thy Liberty, and fix thee mine.

By all the Gods of Glory and of Love,

I will engage my Faith, you shall be free;

Yes, yes, my suff'ring Fair, I've yet a Thought

May aid our Hopes, and gain the wish'd Success:

Sophronia to my Brother's Bed betroth'd,

Whom I have ever mark'd with wondring Eyes,

A ready, faithful, tho uncourted Friend,

Shall yield us now a seasonable Service,

And move my Brother *Honoric*, who stands

No less the Son, than Fav'rite of the King,

To use his Interest, where my own has fail'd.

Eud. 'Tis generously thought, my *Thrasimond*;

But take not an Advantage of my Weakness,

Yourself the only Witness of my Love.

Go on and prosper in the friendly Office,

Eudofia's the Reward: But oh! beware,

Trust not too far that fierce, that haughty Fair-One;

(Forgive these jealous Fears) for much I doubt

Of her Sincerity, or our Success.

[Exit *Eudofia*.

Thr. Causeless are all thy Doubts, too fearful Prin-

cesses:

Why, let her know the Secret of our Loves,

'Tis safe repos'd, (*Sophronia* has a Soul,

Fierce as it is, too noble to betray us. [Thoughts,

Nar. My Lord, might *Narbal* speak his humble

The Princess' Fears are not without a Cause:

Sophronia views you with a Lover's Eye,

Your Presence gives new Lustre to her Charms,

And heightens every Beauty in her Face;

She wears this Shew of Friendship, to conceal

The struggling Efforts of a stronger Flame.

Thr.

The IMPERIAL CAPTIVES.

7

Thr. Narbal, forbear, and check that impious
Thought,
Which moves thy Tongue to this unlicens'd Freedom;
Her Faith's already given to *Honoric* :
If she regards me with peculiar Friendship,
'Tis as a Sister to a Brother's Claim.

Nar. If my suspicious Eyes inform me wrong,
Or you, my Lord, yourself are most deceiv'd,
A little Time will shew — But see, she comes!

Enter Sophronia and Justina.

Thr. Welcome, *Sophronia*, doubly welcome now,
Thou Pride, thou Lustre of our *Africk* Courts;
Deign, like the great enlivening God of Day,
T'extend thy healing Influence to a Wretch
O'erwhelm'd with heaviest Woe, and chain'd in Doubt;
Ha! said I, Doubt? forgive the rash Complaint;
What should I doubt thy Goodness, or my Cure,
When you, and only you, can yield the Means?

Soph. My Lord, yourself prolong your own Despair;
If 'tis *Sophronia's* Hand must reach you Aid,
Why thus do your ambiguous Words amuse
The readiest of your Friends? Demand that Aid.

Thr. No longer can my burning Heart support
This furious Anarchy of warring Passions; [Frowns,
Like some poor Wretch turn'd loose to Fortune's
To clam'rous Foes, and vile deserting Friends,
The Curse of Thought, Reflection, and Despair,
Too much I doubt each Remedy I wish;
And yet I must, I will reveal my Pain:
But let me first adjure you, summon up
Each Faculty of Goodness in your Soul;
By your great Self, and by your Sex I beg you,
By all the softning Force of Sighs and Tears,
With Pity hear, with gen'rous Speed redress
A Prince, the Heir of *Africk*, and a Lover.

Soph.

Soph. Pleasing Surprize! he loves; o'erwhelming Rapture! [Aside,

What means, my Lord, this frantick Dress of Words?

Thr. It means the sharpest Sorrow Man can feel,
The bitt'rest Pangs desponding Love can mourn.

Soph. Love, Prince! and is it possible that you,
Whose Infant Soul was practis'd in the School
Of hardy Toils, and the rough Trade of War,
Can own a Woman's Conquest, and resign
Your Martial Fires to Love's enfeebling Flame.

Thr. 'Tis Beauty, Madam, animates the Warriour;
And Love that spurs him to the Tracts of Glory:
Lay the World's several Empires in his Grasp,
The Conquest would be judg'd a trivial Purchase,
If Love, as well as Fame, were not to crown
The Victor's Brow, and heighten his Reward.

Soph. When Princes form'd like *Thrasimond* shall
love,

Their Passion may command their own Reward.
Let Fear, Contempt, Distrustings, and Disdain,
Be the due Portion of th' inferiour World,
Dull, vulgar Courtship, and mechanick Love,
Tortures unworthy you, young valiant Prince,
The Fav'rite Son of Empire and of Glory!
What Beauty worth your Passion, but with Pride
Will meet the Proffer, and compleat your Hopes?

Thr. Those Hopes must still rest uncompleated all,
If you withhold your Aid; I would request it,
But yet I fear: (curs'd Diffidence of Love!)

Soph. Fear nought, but let me know, I'll soon con-
vince you,
How much you injure both yourself and me.

Thr. Then at your Feet, thus humble'd I implore.
[Kneeling.

Soph. Nay, rise, my Lord, I must not see you thus,
This Posture shames the Friend you may command.
Did you but weigh this Torment of Suspense,

With

With half the Transport that *Sophonra's* Soul
Will know in labouring for your Ease, you would not,
You could not thus delay, be thus unkind.

Thr. Bless'd be the Tongue that utters so much
Goodness,
Gives such Prefages of my future Bliss.

Soph. Bless'd be the happy Hour *Sophonra* hears it.
[*Aside.*

Come, Prince, impatient I attend the Means,
That, prosp'ring your Desires, may crown my own.

Thr. Thus hear my Woes, and thence resolve my
My Brother, Madam, is contracted yours, [Fate:
Both by my Father's, and the People's Voice.

Soph. And what of that? Tho *Honoric's* your Foe,
Sophonra may deserve a kinder Name.

Thr. To you then I appeal for instant Justice:
Or by your Goodness let this Anguish die,
Or shall this Sword, the Soldier's brave Companion,
Which has so oft in the red Sweat of War
Made fierce Opposers fly their certain Fate,
And bore the glorious Triumph of the Day,
Now to a nobler Triumph turn its Point,
And set its suff'ring Master free at once
From his worst Foes, his Misery and his Life?
You, Madam, have the Sway o'er *Honoric's* Heart,
And may employ your Int'rest to procure
(For he can have at will my Father's Ear)
Th' unhappy Captive Princesses their Freedom.

Soph. Ha!

Thr. This is the Boon that *Thrasimond* petitions,
This must resolve your Friendship, or my Doom.

Soph. Perdition! Daggers! Hell! I die, *Justina*!
[*Aside.*

Thr. Nay, start not, Madam; but consider well
What you've engag'd, what *Thrasimond* requests:
Eudofia, she the fair Imperial Captive,
Is mine by every Tye of mutual Love,

10 *The IMPERIAL CAPTIVES.*

Consenting Passions, and Cementing Hearts :

'Tis you that hold their Fates within your power,
And 'tis of you that I demand their Liberty.

Soph. Amazement ! Horror ! Now support me all
Our Sex's Arts, their Pride, and their Dissemblings,
Disguis'd Resentments, and suspended Rage,
Nor let me shew myself the Wretch I am.

Thr. Madam !

Soph. My Lord, I'll make your Interest mine,
You have *Sophronia's* Word, on that confide ;
But name th' unhappy Princesses no more.
You love *Eudofia*, she returns the Flame ;
I have the Trust, depend upon Success,
I will exceed my Promise in your favour.

Thr. Then, *Thrasimond*, again hope, live, and love,
Sophronia and the Gods declare thee happy.

So when amidst the warring Surges Foam,
The trembling Sailor sees his threaten'd Doom,
When scatt'ring Billows o'er the Vessel lave,
And Death's grim Terrors frown in every Wave ;
He to the pitying Gods commends his Prayer,
They still the Storm, and save him from Despair.

[*Exit Thrasimond.*]

Soph. He's gone !
Now burst forth all the Rage, the smother'd Rage
Of injur'd, thwarted, disappointed Woman,
And let this Fury have its Loose of Raving :
On this ungrateful, blind, deceiving Man,
Let my full Bosom level all its Vengeance,
Let me forget his Charms, and curse my own,
My own too weak, too impotent Allurements.
He loves ! for ever let me curse the Sound,
Since not the kind, the languishing *Sophronia*.
What Guilt so heinous has my Soul conceiv'd,
That could call down a Punishment so great,
Successless Burnings, and a Man's Disdain !
Alas ! *Justina*, did I hear him right ?

And

The IMPERIAL CAPTIVES. II

And am I thrown beside all Hope for ever?
By all my Wrongs I must, I will have Vengeance;
But where, on whom, or how shall I direct it?

Just. Madam, have happier Thoughts.

Soph. Peace! poor Adviser.

Eudofia, she the fair Imperial Captive,
Is mine by every Tye of mutual Love!

These were the direful, killing, damning Words.

Eudofia! which? the Empress or her Daughter?

'Tis both their Names, and both are but too fair.

Let me disown my Nature and my Sex,

If ever I forget this worst of Wrongs,

My slighted Beauty and neglected Charms;

By Heaven I'll wreak my Vengeance on them both,

Then this curs'd, happy Rival can't escape it;

I'm justify'd by Love, 'tis his Revenge.

Just. This Transport of your Passion runs too far;

What has the Empress, or her Daughter done,

To kindle up such Wrath?

Soph. Done, done, *Justina!*

They've ravish'd from me all, my Life, my Soul,

The brightest Object of the fiercest Love,

My Prince, my darling Hope, my *Thrasimond*.

Just. Till now then was the Prince's Heart your
own?

Soph. Nor mine, nor any other's, till the Time,

(Curse on the late Success of *Gens'ric's* Arms,

That brought her first to *Carthage* to undo me!)

When this detested Rival made it hers.

Am I the first in *Africk* Courts for Beauty?

And can I bear with Patience, think, *Justina,*

That Curse of Curses to a Woman's Soul,

To see myself out-worship'd and out-shone;

That Youth my burning Wishes sought so long,

Possess'd and panting in another's Arms?

Just. Madam, if Reason ———

12 *The IMPERIAL CAPTIVES.*

Soph. What of Reason? ha! ha!
 Let Reason travel hence to distant Climes,
 To dastard Souls that court its feeble Aid;
 Love, Love, and dire Revenge have all my Heart.

Just. If that the Prince had been unfaithful,
 then——

Soph. Ah! if he were, I then might be belov'd.
 Nay, for another had he quitted me,
 So full, so just a Cause for my Complaints,
 Had made my Anguish less: but he is faithful,
 So faithful, that his Virtue is my Ruin;
 And faithful might his Soul have been to me,
 If I had dar'd to put it in his power,
 Nor kept this fatal Flame so long disguis'd.
 Why blame I him? my Miseries to myself
 Are owing all: Could *Thrasimond* divine
 But *Honoric* alone possess'd my Heart?

Just. And is not *Honoric* destin'd for your Lord?
 Can you break thro' th' Engagements bind you to him?
 Or unresenting would he bear the Wrong?
 He who so often murmurs at his Fate,
 Nor brooks, but with Repinings and Disdain,
 An Elder Brother's Right in *Thrasimond*,
 Could he behold the Center of his Wishes
 Snatch'd from him by the Object of his Hate,
 Not hurried by his proud Ambition, vow
 His too successful Brother's instant Ruin?

Soph. Thou art a Stranger here, nor know'st, *Justina*,
 With what indifferent Eyes, what cold Regard
 This Promise of a future Husband views me:
 No, *Honoric*'s Heart is senseless of these Charms,
 His Love nought more than Policy of State
 When to suppress the Insults on our Realm,
 My Father call'd in *Genferic* to his Aid,
 To engage him firmer, offer'd for Reward
 The Dividend of all his rescu'd Regions;
 Tempted by such a Prospect of Advantage,

This

This proud aspiring *Vandal* soon approv'd him
The Enterprize, and with a thousand Vessels
Darken'd the Shores of *Africk*, rais'd afresh
Each drooping Heart, and chas'd away the Foe
But, (faithless, false Appearance of Relief!)
He sav'd us from one Enemy, to prove
A greater, more encroaching Foe himself;
Puff'd up with Conquest, and but ill content
With the due Limits of my Father's Promise,
This false confederate Friend, this Tyrant Victor,
As fortunate in Arms, grew great in Guilt,
Broke Oath on Oath, usurp'd the whole Dominion,
Forc'd him to fly his now subjected Country,
And end his miserable Days an Exile.

Just. Disastrous Turn of Fortune! sad Relation!

Soph. Yet Conquest gain'd not Love; the People still,
True to my Father and his Injur'd House,
Restless in Bondage, rose in my behalf,
Revolting daily from th' Usurper's Side:
Then *Genferic*, too subtle Politician,
To unite the jarring Int'rests of our Houses,
Appease the People, and secure himself,
Propos'd this Son, this *Honoric* for my Husband;
Then scarcely fix Years old; alas! too young
To know the Imposition on my Fate:
Since when I've liv'd as *Honoric's* Wife. But Oh!

Too oft, to my Destruction and Despair,
With full desiring Eyes, and bleeding Heart,
With anxious Joy, fierce Doubts, and fiercer Hopes,
(The dang'rous Warfare of imperious Love!)
I saw the elder Sunshine of the Court,
The lovely *Thrasimond*; the rest you know.

Just. I do, and share with you in all your Griefs.

Soph. I thank thy Pity, Grief and Pity's all
That Friendship can expect, or Friendship pay.
But thy unhappy Mistress must do more,

She

14 *The IMPERIAL CAPTIVES.*

She must have Thoughts that swell beyond Com-
plainings,
Thoughts equal to her Miseries and herself:
Justice and Vengeance!

Just. How to compass them?

Sop. That Thought's already mine; the cunning
Aspar,

The first in Trust, and second in the Empire,
Owes to the Bounty of my Father's Hand
His present Greatness and exalted Power,
He'll scorn to prove ungrateful to the Daughter:
And him will I employ, my glorious Engine
To push my Wrath, and model my Resentments
Through all the Windings of a Statesman's Brain,
To dart their meditated Fury home
On this disdainful, charming, hated Prince;
To ruin *Thrasimond*, and break the more
Detested Nuptials with his Brother off.
Go, go, *Justina*, find the Statesman out,
Tell him within an hour *Sophronia* waits him
At private in her Closet; tell him all
Her Fears, Despondings, Agonies and Wrongs!
Tell him the Source of all; and let him know
How much I need his Friendship and his Aid.

Just. And have you weigh'd with Caution the
! Result,

These jarring Thoughts and puzzl'd Resolutions?
You would break thro' th' Engagements of a Match
That thwarts your Inclination, and yet him
For whom you break it, *Thrasimond*, you doom
To an eternal Wretchedness: First think,
And will you love him less?

Sop. What, love him still!
Witness ye Powers, and punish or approve
As I pursue my Purpose, or desert it.
What, languish for the Cause of all my Ruin!
Then by severest Justice let me perish,

Lightning

Lightning or Thunder dash this Frame to nothing ;
 Let suffocating Earth devour my Guilt,
 If I forget implacably to pay
 With bitt' rest Malice and eternal Hate
 This unregarding Insult to my Love ;
 Or, what is worse, let me again be scorn'd,
 And live to feel my present Pangs for ever.

Just. And yet I fear—

Soph. Fear nothing for *Sophronia* :

As on the Racks of jealous Love I die,
 With equal Fury shall my Justice fly ;
 Unaw'd by Fear, by Danger, or by Shame,
 I'll brave my Ruin to avenge my Flame,
 Throw off my Sex e'er I'll my Rage abate,
 And be a Woman only in my Hate.



ACT



ACT II.

Sophronia, Justina.

Soph. SPAR has promis'd all my Rage could



with,

And this *Eudofia's Thrasimond* shall find
His Hopes like sickly Flow'rs abortive Pride,
But feel an adverse Blast, and disappear.
He who could slight *Sophronia's* proffer'd Charms,
To doat and languish for a Slave's Embrace,
Shall with an unsuspected Tempest shake,
A Rival (in his Father) bear her from him:
Genferic for weighty Arguments of State
Shall court the Empress to his Crown and Bed,
And leave the groveling *Thrasimond* to know
Sophronia's dire Extremity of Anguish,
Divided Loves, and separated Hearts!

Just. And how are you assur'd his Heart is hers?
Perhaps the Daughter's Charms may tempt him most.

Soph. To think so, were to call him base indeed,
Add to my Torments, and to his Reproach.
No, 'tis th' Imperial Mother's fuller Bloom
Of perfect Beauties, Majesty and Soul,
That blinds the doating *Thrasimond* to me.
The Empress has him all, and curse me *Jove*,
If I could form a Wish of nobler Vengeance,

Than

Than to stand by a Witness to each Pang,
Convulsive Throb, and rending of the Heart,
This Separation by his Duty aw'd,
This forc'd Concession to a Father's Joy,
Will from his Soul extort with Tears of Blood.
To view him plunder'd thus, his Heaven renounc'd,
Another in his place, great Gods! his Torture!

Just. That, that would be Revenge!

Soph. It would indeed;
Such as could only be improv'd by this,
To see the young, resenting, amorous Prince,
Throw the ungrateful Charmer from his Breast;
And to torment her Pride with new Desires,
Fierce Pangs, and anxious Burnings, languish here,
Here at my feet, *Justina*.

Just. Yes, Madam, then
To triumph in your turn, to spurn him from you,
And pay with Interest back his first Disdain.

Soph. There thou hast struck me in the tend'rest
Vein,
The Woman and the Lover jar within me,
I cannot, dare not answer for my Constancy,
Put to so great a Trial; no, *Justina*,
I fear to say what Thoughts or what Resolves,
A Sight like that might teach me.

Soph. How! what you?

Soph. That former Burst of imprecating Rage
That pour'd forth all the direst, fiercest Vows
Of Malice, Vengeance, Cruelty, and Hate,
Was but, I fear, too much th'impetuous Proof
Of Passions unsuppress'd, and Love disguis'd;
And hottest was that Love, by how much more
My Rage was heighten'd and the Phrenzy swell'd.

Just. Madam, the King is here.

Soph. Confusion! how
Shall I conceal my Blushes and Disorder?

Enter Genferic, Honoric, and Aspar.

Gen. You fly us, Madam, and indeed of late
To our no less Amazement than Concern,
We have remark'd a discontented Frown
Still gathering on your Brow at our Approach.
Have you or Grounds or Subject of Complaint?
Speak, and we hear thee: But I guess the Cause,
The Nuptial Rites have been delay'd too long,
The promis'd Pleasure sickens to the Thought,
And Expectation is at last grown weary.
I doubt not but you wonder at the Reason;
But rest assur'd we had a powerful Reason.

Soph. Who shall controul your Will? You wrong
my Soul,
To think from thence that I contract my Brow,
Accuse delaying Fate, or scowl at thee:
No, 'tis the Pride and Greatness of my Mind,
That knows whene'er my Presence is offensive,
And learns me thus to ease myself and you.

[*Exit Sophronia.*

Gen. Act as you please, and tremble they who fear
Thy feeble Rage, and impotent Designs;
A more important Care takes up my Thoughts.
Say, *Honoric*, canst thou love this haughty Maid?
Open thy Mind, unaw'd and unreserv'd;
'Tis true I found it for my Safety once,
When *Africk's* murmuring Regions brook'd but ill
A Conqueror's Reign, and stood in Arms against me,
To heal the publick Difference and the War,
T'engage thy Faith to this *Sophronia*, then
Heirefs o'th' Realm; but now those Days are past,
The City's free from Mutiny, the Court
Unpoison'd by Cabals or State-Intrigues,
The Party-Clamours hush'd, and Faction dead:
Nor, tho this Calm has cost us Seas of Blood,

Can

Can I descend to think the Purchase dear.
Here, *Honoric*, I acquit thee from each Tye,
Each prior Obligation of my own,
Chuse for thyself of all our Beauties one,
To be the happy Partner of thy Bed,
As Nature dictates, and thy Heart inclines.

Hon. My ever-gracious Lord, that Choice be yours!
My Heart, my Soul, my Passions and Desires
Are all resign'd and wait on your Commands;
Propose the Object of my Love or Hate,
Your Will and *Honoric's* Duty are the same.
Or to *Sophronia*, or another join
This Son, or keep him unacquainted still
With the enervate Joys of *Hymen's* Slaves,
You'll find him *Honoric*, and your Son in all:
Ambition is my Fav'rite Mistress now,
The rugged Camp, shrill Fife, or glitt'ring Spear,
The darling Conversation I adore.

Gen. By Heav'n I like this mounting of the Soul,
That far our-soars thy Father's lavish Hopes,
That hunts bright Honour thro each puzzl'd Path;
And bravely prizes Glory by the Toils
That block the dang'rous, terrible Ascent.
Yet *Thrasimond* by Birth succeeds to Empire,
An elder Brother snatches thy Reward;
And tho my Heart prefers thee in my Love,
I yet, in spite of me, foresee the Day
That thou must pay a Subject's Homage there,
Unless we make the present Minutes ours,
And add a foreign Sceptre to our own:
I'll lay the golden Prospect to thy view;
Pursue the great Temptation, fix Success,
And satiate thy Ambition with a Crown.

Hon. 'Tis greatly thought.

Gen. And may be greatly executed too:
Weigh but each Circumstance of Time and Things,
All correspond, and promise certain Aid.

20 *The IMPERIAL CAPTIVES.*

Our Magazines are stor'd, Fleet stoutly mann'd,
Our Coffers rich, each warlike Sinew strong;
The neighb'ring Princes weak in every Part,
Exhausted by the Length of former Wars,
Enjoy the present Truce, indulge secure
The short-liv'd Slumbers of a fancy'd Peace,
Themselves and their Suspicions all asleep,
What hinders but we make th' Advantage sure?
But then, my Son, what Colour shall we use,
To gild this Rupture with a Face of Justice?
How can we draw the giddy Rabble in,
But with the subtle Countenance of Right?

Hon. What Right but that of Conquest can we
claim?

Gen. I have, my Son, a Marriage in my Thoughts,
Would give a glorious Sanction to our Cause,
And yield us all our Hopes: You shall be join'd,
Not to *Sophronia*, alt'ring Time has render'd
A Match impolitick and useles there:
Eudofia, Daughter to *Rome's* Captive Empress
(Gain but her Hand) can justify a War,
And give thee Title to the *Roman* Empire:
Her Father's Death, her Mother's forc'd Alliance
With *Maximus*, his Tyranny and Guilt,
Great Motives of Revenge, and Spurs to Conquest
That boasted Mistress of the World lies now
Dispirited beneath a Load of Woes,
Open to War, and prostrate to thy Sword,
Shews but a Mournful Remnant of its Greatness;
Where Grandeur swell'd, and Temples blaz'd with
Gold,
A pillag'd Country, and a desert World.

Hon. And how will they admit that Son to reign,
Whose Father's Hands struck deepest in their Ruin,
And ravag'd 'mongst the foremost of their Foes?

Gen. The Name of Foe will be expung'd in thee,
When wedded to that *Roman* Monarch's Blood,

Whose

Whose Memory lives worship'd with their Gods.
 Nay more, I've secret Friends, and great ones too,
 By Birth tho *Romans*, *Vandals* in their Hearts,
 And to our Int'rest firm : it rests in you
 To make the Princess yours, but that's a Task
 Where all the pow'rful Eloquence of Love,
 Insinuating Arts, and Court-Address,
 Must be apply'd to melt her to your Wishes;
 For know, her Pride is equal to her Birth.

Hon. She knows not then —

Gen. 'Twas never yet propos'd ;

Aspar himself, the foremost in our Trust,
 Was till this Hour a Stranger to the Secret :
 Not that my Soul desided in the Man,
 Who ever has approv'd himself with Honour
 The worthiest in his Service to our Throne ;
 But till this Time uncertain how, or where,
 Your Heart might be engag'd and thwart my
 Scheme,

I have conceal'd my well-concerted View ;
 And had I found a Bar like that, myself,
 Rather than lose this golden Opportunity,
 This Height and Crown of my aspiring Hopes,
 Would have espous'd the Princess in your stead,
 Thrown off the Crime of disproportion'd Years,
 And sprung to second Youth in her Embrace,
 Our Fleet's already in th' *Italian* Seas ;
 The Throne of *Maximus* is vacant still ;
 And tho *Avitus* is proclaim'd in *Gaul*,
 Rome's yet without a Lord ; the jarring Senate,
 Confounded in their Counsels and their Fears ;
 Let but *Eudofia* head the Enterprize,
 With one consenting, general Vote declare
 Her Husband Emperor. Go, *Honorio*, go
 Fall at her Feet, woo, languish, press her warm,
 And think obtaining her, obtains a Crown.

[Exit *Honorio*.

What

What Lengths, what Hazards, and what Bars of Guilt,

Would I not pass regardless, dauntless by,
To compass this Extent of all my Hopes,
And see him seated strong in *Caesar's* Throne?

'Tis true, his Brother's generous and brave;
But there's a Bent in Nature bears against him,
And sways to *Honoric* most my yielding Heart.
Say, *Aspar*, Can'st thou think the Princess dares
Refuse, or not refusing, *Rome* decline
To pay him Homage, and salute him Lord?

Asp. To make both more propitious to their Vows,
Then join your Houses by a double Match,
Whilst *Hon'ric* woos the Princess to his Bed,
Suppose the Mother worthy of your own:
Her Soul, her Beauty, and illustrious Birth,
All answer to your Honour and your Rank.

Gen. Ill-judging Policy! A Marriage there
Would be the surest Bar to my Designs!
Can the yet-bleeding States of *Italy*
So soon forget whose Invitation drew
My Sword of Desolation thro' the Land,
Then to behold the Authors of their Woes
So close ally'd?—Distraction would ensue!
Would their imbitter'd Wounds then teach them
aught

But Curses, Hate, and Vengeance on us both?

Asp. Their Hate, so deeply grounded, might as well
Extend to all the Family.

Gen. Aspar. No:
What has *Rome* suffer'd from the Daughter's Hand?
How can it then impute its Wrongs to her?
Of Years too young, too innocent to mix
In such important enterprizing Counsels,
Urg'd by no Views of vengeful Malice; she
Into its Bosom call'd no foreign Fo.

[Exit Honoric]

What

But,

But, *Aspar*, I have farther Reasons still,
And foreign to the Policies of State :
My Humour and my Age oppose the Match :
The Empress is a Woman fierce and proud,
Nor to be won with ease the common Way :
'Tis not a Sigh, sad Look, or soft'ning Tear
Can gain upon her Soul ; her Pride expects
An Age of awful Servitude and Homage,
Assiduous Watchings, Languishments, and Racks,
To recommend the Slave she deigns to hear.

Asp. Think not, my Lord, she can, or dare be cruel.

Gen. *Aspar*, I'd tear my Heart out sooner, far,
Than yield Dominion to this Rebel Passion !
If I have lov'd, I lov'd but for an Hour ;
Instant Fruition gave me present ease :
I cannot, will not wait a slow Return.
Dull Expectations are for vulgar Lovers,
A Monarch's Time wears precious, and disdains
To be expended at a Woman's Feet !

Asp. But tell her that you love, and leave to me
To let her know the Worth of such a Conquest.

Gen. All thy Endeavours are superfluous still
T'enslave thy Master, and enflame my Breast ;
I am not to be talk'd into a Lover.

Aspar, 'tis time you seek the Empress out,
And let her know my Purpose to procure
The Union of our Houses : But she comes !
Now Courtesy and Flatt'ry, aid me all
To bend this stubborn, this imperious Spirit,
That has withstood a Series of Misfortunes ;
Unyielding, unsubdu'd, and still the same.

Enter Empress.

Gen. Madam, at length our Hatred dates its End ;
On a King's Word, you shall again be free,

Again

24 The IMPERIAL CAPTIVES.

Again shall you enjoy the Banks of *Tyber* :
 A hundred thousand of my choicest Troops
 Shall be your Safeguard, and conduct you there ;
 All forfeit Life, or re-establish you :
 Myself in Person swear to lead them on.
 Nay, doubt not this ; for by the God of War,
 By ev'ry Pow'r of Heav'n and Earth, I here ———

Emp. Gens'ric, Reserve those Oaths t'impose on
 Minds
 More easy, and more credulous than mine.
 They cannot cheat Resentments like my own,
 Too much already, and too long deceiv'd !
 Let Chains, and Deaths, and *Lybia's* groaning States,
 And all thy Tyrant Impositions there,
 Teach me to credit an Usurper's Faith.

Gen. Is Faith that poor imaginary Virtue,
 That Dream, to preach a King into a Slave ?
 The Statesman only makes it serve a Turn,
 And soon dispenses with the brittle Tie.
 But, Madam, your Afflictions are not yet
 Past Remedy ; you shall be carry'd back
 In Pomp and Honour to your native *Rome* :
 To do you Grace, myself will wait you there.

Emp. Has *Rome* more Treasures left to pillage, then ?

Gen. You do me wrong, 'tis for your sake alone.

Emp. For mine ! 'Tis falsely judg'd, to think that I
 Can give you Colour for a second War.
 Would you revisit *Rome*, resolve on some
 New Motive, some more plausible Pretence.

Gen. I here propose the Union of our Houses ;
 To join our Int'rests, and conclude our Jars :
 Let this evince how much I am sincere.

Emp. Unite with thee ! Oh ! sooner, sooner far,
 The Poles shall meet, and Contraries agree ;
 Th' Antipathies of Nature be forgot ;
 Wolves graze with Lambs, and Vultures roost with
 Doves ;

The Wretch that's stung, with fatal Mercy nurse
The Viper in his Breast, than we forget
To hate eternally thy Race, and thee.

Gen. Nay, storm not, this is what I gladly wish
Accomplish'd for the Int'rest of us both;
And in behalf of *Honoric*, my Son,
The Benefit I offer to your House,
With Joy attend, with Gratitude embrace.
I make you Mistress of the *Roman* Empire,
As soon as *Hymen's* sacred Rites unite
The Princess and my Son.

Emp. My Daughter, ha!
I'd rather plunge a Dagger in her Breast,
And save the Glory of our spotless Race,
'Than see the hated Coupling; curs'd Idea!
Change, change, my Lord, this generous Design,
'Tis too much Honour for our hopeless State:
For shame! what, *Honoric* wed his Father's Slave!
And will he stoop to such Indignity?
He cannot, sure, approve it: For myself,
I could with fuller Satisfaction meet
Befriending Death, than such a wond'rous Bounty.

Gen. This is too much; but I advise you, Madam,
Henceforth beware, nor urge my Fury more:
Learn, with becoming Thanks, to prize the Glory
A Victor and a King descends to proffer.
Ha! know you, with one Nod, like *Jove*, I could—

Emp. What could'st thou do? Speak out, I scorn
to tremble;
And, Blusterer, dare thy Menaces their worst.
Oh! would thy Rage be once severely kind,
And end this hated, this inglorious Life,
I'd bless relenting Fate, and pardon thee;
But thou'rt my Tyrant, and my Curse in all:
I beg but Death, and thou deny'st me that.

26 *The IMPERIAL CAPTIVES.*

Gen. Those only wish to die who fear to live,
Fetter'd with Guilt, Reflection, and Remorse,
Made Cowards by an Age of former Crimes :
Hence this Distaste of Life, these desperate Thoughts.

Emp. But those who know no Crimes, know no
Remorse.

Gen. Can'st thou acquit thyself? Think, think
again,

What was the Death of *Maximus*? He was —

Emp. A Villain, and a Tyrant like thyself.
Oh! could I, to th' all-searching Conscience here,
But answer ev'ry Action of my Life
With equal Boldness, as that glorious Deed
That compass'd my resolv'd, my just Revenge
On him by whom my former Husband fell,
That durst aspire, and did by Force succeed
My *Valentinian* in his Throne and Bed!
I suffer'd him to wed me, gave my Hand,
When most my Heart was meditating Vengeance,
I yielded to his Wishes and Embrace,
But as the surest Method to destroy :
And let the future World learn this from me,
Where Injuries deeply strike, those patient Slaves
That feel their Smart, yet dare not to revenge 'em,
Like flying Soldiers, mark'd with shameful Scars,
Disgrace their Beings, and deserve their Wounds.

Gen. I understand you, Madam, and, indeed,
This Spirit of Revenge, and Thirst of Blood,
Speak the ambitious Race from whence you sprung;
All *Italy* has curs'd its fatal Guilt.

Emp. And *Carthage* may have cause to curse it too.
The Princess is my Daughter, and, be cautious :
Each Maxim of her Mother's was impress'd
And grafted early on her Infant Mind.
She knows the noble Soul that suffers Wrong
Demands as great a Vengeance to appease it :
Timely retract the Honour you vouchsafe her ;

Nor

Nor rashly cover an Alliance there,
The Blood of *Theodosius* swells her Veins.
Know you what Opportunity of Justice
Her Rage may seize to vindicate our Wrongs?
That Head may be in danger even here.

Gen. This Insolence instructs me to beware.
Yes, I will guard this Head. But, Madam, hear me;
Look to't, your Daughter, e'er the Morning's Dawn.
Vouchsafes a quick Compliance to our Will,
Or I may take my turn to threaten next:
Know, 'tis enough that I command it so.
She comes! I'll leave you to consult yourselves.

[*Exeunt Gen. and Aspar.*]

Enter Eudofia.

Emp. Daughter, you're yet a Stranger to your
Fate:
Gens'ric has chose a Husband for your Bed.

Eud. For mine! From whence this insolent Pro-
ceeding?
Am I at his Dispose?

Emp. He thinks, indeed,
He does thee too much Honour by his Choice,
When he prefers thee to a Son of his.

Eud. A Son of his, ha! *Honoric's* betroth'd;
And *Thrasimond*—— But, Madam, to your Will,
I am a Daughter, and Obedience all.

Emp. I see the fond Delusion of thy Hopes:
Daughter, you love the Prince, and love him still:
Thy Mother gives Consent; nay, bids thee blest
A Youth, so well deserving of us both,
Who views our Mis'ries, and his Father's Crimes,
With just Disdain, and sympathizing Woe,
Sever'd by Virtue from his barbarous Race.
But, oh! prepare thee for a Shock beyond
His former Insults, or these servile Chains.

28 The IMPERIAL CAPTIVES.

Maugre the Faith of Oaths, this Tyrant King,
In bold defiance to the Gods and Justice,
Breaks with *Sophronia* thro each sacred Tie,
And gives her promis'd *Honoric* to you.

Eud. Unhappy Revolution! Can it be?

Emp. So sure, so dreadful is it, only he,
'That Prince you love, is able to prevent it:
Tell him the threatned Wrong, implore his Aid;
He is the Idol in the publick Eye,
The Promise and the Hope of ev'ry Heart:
And if he loves, what dares not Love attempt,
'To force thy Rescue from a Rival's Triumph?

Eud. Instead of hazarding a Life so dear,
Should I explain my Sorrows to his Brother;
Could he then dare —

Emp. Alas! What dares he not?

'Tis not for Love that he aspires to thee,
But as the Ladder to the *Roman* Empire.
His Race, his Pride, and his Ambition's known:
We know him, base, and cruel as he is,
'The fav'rite Heir of all his Father's Crimes.

Eud. And can we count so many neighb'ring Realms,
Confederate Nations, and Allies to *Rome*,
Yet none to rescue her Imperial Blood
From these Barbarian Insults? Where is fled
That dreaded *Roman* Spirit, that of old
Inform'd her Heroes with the Souls of Gods?

Emp. That Glory is eclips'd; the present *Rome*
Is but a shameful Shadow of the old:
We're beaten and despis'd, the *Roman* Virtue,
And far-fam'd *Roman* Grandeur, are no more.
Oh, *Italy*! Oh miserable Country!
Once was't thou stil'd the Arbiter of Kings,
'Th'expanded Globe, all bending to thy Laws;
But Heav'n has now forsook thee in its Vengeance:
Thy Crimes have made thee weak; yes, yes, 'twas
those,

Not

Not *Genferic* raz'd thy Temples to the ground ;
By those thy costly Palaces have blaz'd,
And we, tho' guiltless, feel the Guilty's Fate :
Not one Ally will arm in our Defence ;
The Wife and Daughters of those Godlike Men,
That were the boasted Masters of the World,
Groan unassisted in a State of Bondage.

Eud. Oh! that a speedy Death would give us that
The Coward *Martian* dares not undertake !

Emp. Slave to an Oath, which once redeem'd his
Life,

He vainly pities what he fears to aid.

Go, Daughter, find out *Thrasimond*, make him

The Witness of thy Tears, and thy Distress,

Let him the Father's Tyranny atone,

Espouse thy Cause, and make thy Wrongs his own.



ACT



ACT III.

Thrasimond and Narbal.

Thr. **A** M I reserv'd to be th' eternal Mark
Of Heaven's Resentment, and the Slave
of Fate?

Tyrannick Sentence! Anguish undeserv'd!
Ha! *Narbal*, speak: say, did'st thou tell me right?
Or am I only tortur'd by my Fears?
Have I then lov'd so fiercely, and so long,
To find a Rival Brother dash my Hopes?
He quits *Sophronia*, he forsakes his own,
To prove himself a Villain, me a Wretch:
Why must I suffer from a Brother's Guilt?
Where are his Oaths, that to *Eudofia* thus
He pays the Tribute of a perjurd Heart?
Why were *Sophronia*'s Charms too weak to hold him,
Bar his Revolting, and prevent his Crimes?
Or why was my *Eudofia* form'd so fair?

Nar. My Lord, he acts not of himself alone,
But counsell'd and supported by your Father.

Thr. Does he then, partial Parent, barb'rous King!
Act so unworthy both those sacred Names?
I see, great Gods! you are Confederates all,
Join in my Ruin, and conspire to curse me.
But heard you how the Empress did receive
This rash Proposal? for my Princess, she,

I know, opposes their unjust Designs ;
And would they force her to their Tyrant Wills ?

Nar. My Lord, she comes herself, to her I leave
you,

To gain a further Knowledge of your Fate.

Enter Eudofia.

Eud. (After a long Pause.)

Thus strangely fix'd, thus silent to your Friend,
Not speak to your *Eudofia*? Cruel Fate!

Then I foresee my Wretchedness indeed.

Thr. Alas! my Fair, I'm searching in thy Eyes
To teach me what to say.

Eud. Oh *Thrasimond*!

Needs then thy Heart an idle Prompter there,
To teach you how to greet the Maid that loves you?
But that, my Lord, I fear, like faithless Friendship,
Unkindly now abandons the Distress'd,
Nor shares *Eudofia*'s Griefs, nor bleeds with mine;
Else sooner had it taught thy frozen Tongue
To make me some amends for all my Pains,
To tell me thou wert true, and felt my Woes.
How art thou chang'd! I see my Ruin plain;
Now welcome Death, thou far more generous
Friend

To her that loves, but is belov'd no more.

Thr. Belov'd no more! retract the Accusation!
Say'st thou I love thee not? Let every Pang
Of Doubt, Confusion, Anguish and Despair,
That shews the present Tumult of my Soul,
In speaking Sadness, and expressive Looks,
Upbraid thy Charge, and witness for my Truth.
No, I would ask Instruction from those Eyes,
How I must now address myself, to whom,
My Sister or my faithful Princess still.

Eud

32 The IMPERIAL CAPTIVES.

Eud. Ha! barb'rous *Thrasimond*, and can you then

Suspect me yielding to a Crime like that?

Thr. No, when I do, may I deserve to lose thee;
Then may this Rival, this exulting Brother,
With Heart dilated, Eyes of fiery Transport,
In all the furious Throbs of blending Love,
Snatch thy rich, panting Beauties to himself,
And all my hop'd-for Pleasures in my stead,
And in the Folds of thy luxuriant Charms
Shew every jealous, envying, wishing God,
A Rebel Mortal happier than themselves:
May I be doom'd to see it, may I serve

To aid his Raptures by my own Disgrace.

But thou art true, and all those Joys are mine;

Eudisia says she loves: repeat it, Winds;

Ye Rocks in Echoes catch the blissful Sound,

And in eternal Harmony relate

How fair, how constant she; how happy I.

To fear, is impious! Hence, vain boding Terrors!

Thus strengthen'd, what are all the mighty Names
Of Brother, Rival, Father, Monarch now?

Eud. But, Oh alas! my Lord, we have to fear
Much cause indeed, much more than you foresee;
The Brutal Threats and Fury of the King,
These are your Rival Brother's dreadful Arms,
These *Honoric's* Boasts; and what for my Defence,
But Woman's feeble Refuge, Sighs and Tears?

Thr. What d'you account th' Assistance of this
Arm?

Eud. What, rais'd against a Brother! No, my
Lord,

Were my Resentments doubled with my Wrongs,
I would not covet a Revenge so dear,
To buy it with the Guilt of him I love.

Thr.

The IMPERIAL CAPTIVES. 33

Thr. Would you then have me bear with coward
Patience

A happy Rival's Insults? No, my Princess,
Your Beauties and your Wrongs shall cancel all
Th'Affinity of Birth, or Ties of Blood:
Should he but dare the Violence you fear,
What Awe, what Duty, should deter this Arm
From vindicating thee with ample Justice?
No, tho' upheld by *Genferic*, to his Eye
I'd scourge his minion Son, thro' all the Court
Proclaim my Cause, and own no Pow'r but Love.

Eud. My Lord, restrain your Anger, *Gens'ric* comes.

Enter Genferic.

Gen. Madam, I sought you out, to let you know,
What Honours I've design'd your House in you,
To give your Term of lengthen'd Sorrows End,
How far my Pity reaches.

Eud. Pity, ye Gods!

Thr. Sad Mockery of Words! Barbarian Pity!

Gen. Why, Madam, flow these Tears, or whence
your Pain? *[Aside.]*

Eud. Insulter! do you view me here, and ask,
With feign'd Surprize, the Reason of my Tears?
Am I a *Roman*? Can I call to mind
Afflictions and Disgraces heap'd upon me;
My self a Captive, and my Country's Pride
Levell'd and Ravag'd by thy guilty Sword,
And wear a Face of Smiles amidst my Ruin?
Or have these Chains sufficient Harmony
To lull and sooth my Bitterness of Soul,
Put Balm into my Wounds, and dry my Tears?

Gen. Mistaken Princess! why d'you cherish still,
With idle Piety, and guilty Fondness,
The sad Remembrance of a Place so fatal?

34 *The IMPERIAL CAPTIVES.*

Of *Rome*, yet reeking with your Father's Blood!
Disclaim th' ungrateful Land, forget your Birth,
Wed *Honoric*, and *Africk* be your Country.

Eud. The Guilt of *Italy* at length is clear'd,
Its Stains are by its Punishments effac'd;
Its Crimes were great, and infinite its Woes;
Short were the Traitor's Triumphs; certain Death
Soon paid his Treasons their deserv'd Reward.
Should *Carthage* pay *Rome's* Price for all its Guilt,
Then I might change my Form, and smile indeed.

Gen. Madam, my Favours brook not this Return.

Eud. Repent it as you may, I never can
Nor will forget thy Cruelties.

Gen. Is this,
This to be cruel? (Give me Patience, Gods!)
To raise thee from a Slave, ungrateful Woman!
And join thee to the Royal Blood of *Genferic*?
To change thy Bonds for Diadems and Power,
And lay thy Passage open to the Empire?

Eud. What are to me these vain Temptations? what
The Charms of Empire, Diadems, or Power,
But glitt'ring Bubbles, with a mimic Splendour?
What from the gilded Prospect can I hope,
But added Woes, and multiply'd Distress?
What would it aid my Miseries, to trace
My great Forefathers down from distant Time,
And number all the Kindred *Cæsars* out,
But make me more unhappy than I am?
Compare my present Fortune with my past!
Shew me the glorious Height from which I fell,
A Princess to a Slave! the racking Thought!
Oh! had I sprung from some less noble Race,
Of humble Parents, in a Peasant Roof,
Then might I suit my Temper to my State!
Then might I learn to brook Captivity,
Own *Gen'sric* for a Lord, and cringe to thee!

Gen. This is the haughty Language of the great,
The

The noble Sentiments of Royal Pride,
And Minds distinguish'd from *Plebeian* thinking;
But spite of all thy boasted Pedigree,
Know 'tis my Will, that *Honoric* espouse thee;
Dispute not my Commands, for by my Crown
I'll use the glorious Privilege of Power,
And shew my self thy Master.

Eud. Tyrant, well [me:
Boast'st thou the Sway that Fortune gives thee o'er
But you deceive your Vanity, to think
That Fortune has the Power to make me less
The Daughter of an Emperor; I know
I am your Captive, but I know withal,
That being so, I am a Princess still.
Indulge the glorious Privilege of Guilt,
What Chance and Infidelity have gain'd thee;
Be cruel to the utmost of thy Power,
My Heart is still my own, and scorns thy Threats.

[Exit *Eudofia*.

Gen. Ha! Am I *Africk's* Lord, and hear I this?
Or but the Shadow of Authority?
What! have I conquer'd to be disobey'd,
Thus brav'd, thus spurn'd, thus slighted by my Slave?
I've been too patient, and debas'd the Monarch,
But will assert him: This imperious Captive
Shall soon be taught to know herself and me.
'Tis not a List of Ancestors shall fright me,
Or authorize her Arrogance,

Thr. Oh, Sir!

If on my Knees I might be heard, Your Honour—

Gen. My Honour! 'Tis no longer to be worn,
Than useful to the Int'rest of my Crown:
Wisdom consults the Welfare of the State,
And not the Glory of a barren Virtue.

Thr. But see them twisted in each other now,
Like kindred Plants, to rise or fall together:
Maintain your Honour, you support your Crown.

36 *The* IMPERIAL CAPTIVES.

Have you forgot the Time, this stubborn Land
Disputed ev'ry Step by which you rose,
And made your doubtful Claim of Conquest shake?
What could your Armies to secure Possession?
What but the promis'd Marriage of my Brother
With young *Sophronia*, could appease their Clamours,
And fix you on the Throne? You gave your Oath.
Tho' till her riper Years defer'd so long,
Should not the Nuptials be concluded now,
What may we not foresee? I dread to think!

Gen. The Gods that disapprov'd th' imprudent Oath,
Have given me Power to disengage me now,
And have absolv'd me from each slavish Tie:
Yet for a Colour, in some neighb'ring Prince
I will provide a Husband for the Maid;
To that she shall consent.

Thr. By such a Step,
Africk is given up to endless Woes;
Divisions growl afresh, new Factions rage:
You sully all the Fame you have atchiev'd,
In well-fought Battles, and successful Councils:
You leave a Name to late Posterity,
Odious, and mark'd for violated Oaths.

Gen. Ha! wherefore dar'st thou thus rebellious Boy!
Whence does thy Vanity derive Pretence
To awe my Actions, or reform my Conduct?
Owe I to thee the Glories of my Reign?
To thee the great Success of all my Toils,
Th' Exploits that lift me up above the soar
Of common Kings, and fix me with the Gods?
Is't from your Valour, or your Prudence, ha?
That tributary Worlds revere my Name,
And shudder at the Thunder of my Arms?
Where is the Homage, the Respect, you owe
Ungrateful! to a Father and a King?

Thr. Yes, Sir, I am your Son; nor have so soon
Forgot the Duty that I owe a Parent:

Nor

Nor does that pious Rev'rence less appear,
In this Concern, this Boldness that inspires me,
To save the Glory you so rashly hazard.

Sophronia has a deep ingrafted Sway;
The Mistress of the adoring Peoples Hearts;
Who weds her, makes a dangerous Advantage.

Gen. 'Tis well: She must be married then in *Carthage*.

Thr. She'll ne'er consent a Subject should enjoy,
The Charms she hoarded for a Prince's Bed.

Gen. I do believe it.

Thr. Who shall wed her?

Gen. You.

Thr. Forbid it, righteous Gods! I wed *Sophronia*!
What have you said?

Gen. Is she unworthy of you?

Is *Africk's* Heiress one to be despis'd?

Can you be more, more happy than in her?

Thr. Shall I espouse my Brother's plighted Bride?

Sophronia ever claim'd my just Esteem;

I view'd her as a Sister; gaz'd upon her,

But with the Chastness of a Brother's Love,

Could I exceed those Bounds, and not incur

That Guilt recoiling Nature most abhors?

Would you not chuse to hate me do not make

My Disobedience rise from your Constraint.

Gen. Impertinent Excuse! But hear, base Boy,

Nor dare the Fury of an anger'd Monarch,

Whose Pride is to be absolute, as those

Who thought me fit to reign, my Partner Gods,

Whose Will is Wisdom, and whose Word is Fate,

Jealous of Pow'r, impatient of Controul:

Know, Rebel, this is *Genferic's* Decree,

To Morrow, when the Nuptial Forms have made

Your Brother *Honoric*, and *Eudasia* One,

The Priest shall join *Sophronia* and thy self.

Forfeit thy Duty; dare dispute my Doom!

Thr. My

38 *The IMPERIAL CAPTIVES.*

Thr. My Duty and my Reason, both direct
A ready blind Obedience to your Will;
But Love, sole Lord and Monarch o'er it self,
Allows no Ties, no Dictates but its own.
To that mysterious arbitrary Power,
Reason points out, and Duty pleads in vain.

Gen. Aspar, to you I leave it to provide
The necessary Ceremonies strait:
I'll not be trifled with; who disobey,
Their Life shall pay the Forfeit. Think on that.
I leave you, Prince, but torture not thy self,
To study more Evasions to delay me;
For, by the Gods, I'll not be satisfied
With less than a Compliance, by to Morrow
Receive thy Bride, or *Gens'ric* may throw off
The Father, and exert the King indeed.

[*Exeunt Gen. Asp.*

Thr. Gods! how I labour with this civil War,
Of Duty and of Love! ill-fated Prince!
On what canst thou resolve? weigh justly what
Thou ow'st the Names of *Father*, and of *King*:
Much to them both, I owe; but much, much more,
To the deserving Object of my Vows.
To her my conquer'd Inclination bends,
And each subsiding Duty yields to Love.
Then let us fly th' inhospitable Realm;
Fly with *Eudofia* from my Father's Rage:
Oh where, but Dangers will pursue me still?
Where, but to change one Mis'ry for a worse,
And tempt a thousand Rivals, flying one?
Her undesigning Beauty will undo us.
She is so fair, that each enamour'd Prince,
Will envy me the Blessing he protects.
Ha! is not *Honoric* the cruel Source
Of my severe inextricable Woes?
I'll tear him from my Breast, no more my Brother:
I'll chase him as an Alien, and a Foe.

Nar. But

Nar. But not attempt his Life?

Thr. Thus low reduc'd,
Push'd to the Terrors of extream Despair,
By an inhuman Father's partial Hate:
What may not Wretchedness like mine attempt?
What can I hope, but Death and my Revenge?
Is't not enough, I'm tortur'd to behold
My Princess drag her ignominious Chains?
Is't not enough that I receiv'd my Life
From him, that King, that Foe, that has betray'd her?
Is't not enough, that I am still repuls'd,
When at his Feet I bend for her Release?
Is't not enough the Tyrant gives her from me?
T'enrich my rival Brother, ruins me!
But must he shew me yet a fiercer Proof
Of his unnatural Hatred, force my Hand
To act so adverse to my bleeding Heart,
And wed the wrong'd *Sophronia*? Oh, ye Gods!
Does Perjury to him appear no Crime?
Or seems no Crime unlawful, that affords
The pleasing, cruel Means to injure me?

Enter Sophronia.

Soph. I come, my Lord— but find you much surpriz'd!

Say, may I credit what the King has told me?

Thr. To your Misfortune, 'tis a Truth too fatal.
The King is too sincere, he cancels all.
The Ties that bound my Brother and your self;
And chuses out a Husband in his stead,
Whose Heart's unworthy of you.

Soph. Ha! unworthy of me!

I was in hopes, my Lord, since he design'd
To break the destin'd Match with *Honoric*,
He would have kindly given me to a Prince,
Who from admiring Infancy has reign'd

The

40 *The* IMPERIAL CAPTIVES.

The constant Object of my wishing Soul:
Whom Love has made the Ruin of my Peace:
The Master of such Virtues, and such Charms,
As justify that Love, excuse my Fondness,
And draw in ev'ry captivated Heart.

Thr. I thought my Brother had Success enough,
To have secur'd that Heart, and fix'd it his.

Soph. Did you but think, my Lord, how much I
strove,

To force it to my Duty; did you know
The hard, vain Strugglings of a love-sick Maid,
In this desponding agonizing Conflict;
By all my present Pangs, you'd not condemn me.
Oh! what's Resistance, when the Foe is Love?
But since a happier Fate has set me free,
And *Honoric's* call'd away by other Ties,
Why must I find my Bliss oppos'd by You?
'Tis You that have the Pow'r o'er him I love;
From You I wait my Destiny.

Thr. From me?

Soph. From You, my Lord. Need I discover more?
Is not my Meaning plain? You hold my Fate.
How slow you are to save a Virgin's Blushes!
But oh! be kind; prevent th' unequal Match,
To which you say the cruel King condemns me.
Yet (strange Effect of ever-wishing Love!)
So much the Image of that Godlike Youth
Fills my adoring Thoughts, and reigns in all my
Hopes,

That tho' you kindly undeceive me now,
Some Throbs auspicious in my flutt'ring Heart,
Insinuate, that 'twas him your Father nam'd:
Resolve these Doubts, and tell me who he is,
This Undeserver; arm me to reject him,
And to repay the falseness of his Vows,
With Scorn, with Indignation and Disdain.

Thr. His

The IMPERIAL CAPTIVES. 41

Thr. His greatest Fault, alas! is want of Love;
No other way unworthy to espouse you:
He has some Merit, and a Royal Birth,
But wears a Heart that never can be yours.
He woos another, for another burns,
And with a Flame so constant and so fierce,
That to remove its stubborn settled Sway,
My Father threatens, your own bright Beauties shine,
And Death, in all its Horrors, frowns in vain;
Behold the Husband.

Soph. Hell! do I hear all this,
Yet trifle in the height of my Destruction!
My Lord, I know the Husband is design'd me,
And longer to disguise my self is vain.

[*Ex. Soph.*

Nar. Her Eyes, at parting, shot a dreadful Gleam
Of Indignation, Passion, and Revenge.

Thr. Ha! can I answer for the Turns of Fate?
Sophronia now believes— unthought of Horror!
How one Misfortune rises on another!
One dismal lengthen'd Scene of endless Woe!
Oh! my *Eudisia*! there's my deepest Wound!
My Brother haunts thee with malignant Love,
With savage Lust he marks thee for his Prey.
Sophronia's ill-tim'd frantick Passion makes
My Torments more inextricable still.
Since th' angry Gods thus meditate my Ruin,
Wound by so many Foes my injur'd Hopes,
And aim a separate Bolt at ev'ry part;
On me alone the Burthen shall not fall,
I'll spread their Horrors, and involve us all.


G

ACT



A C T IV.

Honoric and Aspar.

Asp. OU are too rash, consider well, my Lord,
And weigh the value of *Eudisia's* Love;
Think not the Toils of Courtship ill
bestow'd,

Nor quit the glorious Chase for one Repulse,
An artful Coyneſs, or diſſembled Frown.
Go on, my Lord, purſue the Princeſs cloſe;
If Love is ſilent, let Ambition ſpeak;
No leſs than *Rome's* the Purchase of your Pains.

Hon. My warlike Soul diſdains the ſervile Taſk,
And bends not to the ſoftning Arts of Love,
Fondly to gaze upon a Woman's Face,
Fling my ſelf proſtrate at her Feet, and waſte,
In Sighs and Languiſhments, the tedious Hours.
I cannot brook her insolent Denial.
Nor more, tho' *Genſeric* himſelf commands,
Will I endure this haughty Captive's Scorn.

Asp. Can you, my Prince, ſo eaſily reſign
The tow'ring Hopes of Sov'reignty and Power,
And for the peeviſh Coyneſs of a Girl?
Forbid it all ye Gods! renounce an Empire?

Hon. I'll find an eaſier Paſſage to a Throne.
But hold, my Brother *Thraſimond* appears.

Enter

Enter Thrasimond.

Thr. My Lord, I would request your private Ear.

Hon. *Aspar*, retire. — And let my Father know,
With what disdain the Princess heard my Suit. [*Aside*

[*Exit Aspar.*

Now, Sir, your Willy and why this angry Brow?

Thr. You know, young Prince, I am *Sophronia's*
Friend;

You know those Ties that are for ever held
To Honour, Virtue, and to Justice sacred,
Plighted your mutual Faiths, and made you One.

Hon. T'appease the wild Disorders of the State,
I know, long since, my Hand was promis'd there.

Thr. But yet, my Lord, well-grounded Fame re-
ports,

That you have broke those Ties,
Set Justice, Honour, and the Gods at nought;

And have abandon'd the deluded Maid,
To make an Off'ring of your Heart elsewhere.

The *Roman* Princess, fair *Eudofia*, shines
The present Object of your faithless Vows;

Her conqu'ring Beauties have seduc'd your Virtue,
Mised your Fame, and prompted you to Perjury.

Hon. Whoe'er could tell you this, was ill advis'd;
He misinterpreted my nobler Views,

And wrong'd the Greatness of my mounting Soul.
If I have stoop'd to court *Eudofia's* Love,

As the chief Bliss to which my hopes aspire,
Yet were her Beauties the least pow'rful Motives.

Thr. Whate'er those Motives are, I'll term them
base,

When thou pursu'st them with a perjur'd Heart.
Prince, I have undertook *Sophronia's* Cause;

Nor can she suffer, but when I am wrong'd:
Reflect on that, and know, tho' certain Ruin

44 The IMPERIAL CAPTIVES.

Attend my just Resentment, I am still
Prepar'd to strike on suff'ring Honour's Side,
And take on me the Inj'ries offer'd her.

Hon. What Right has *Thrasimond* to curb my Will,
Whilst *Gens'ric* counsels and approves my Deeds?
But this is not the first nor only Mark,
Of your fixt Hatred to the King and me.
With Eyes malevolent you view me soar,
On Eagles Wings, above thy feeble Daring;
Envy my happy State, and curse thy own;
It galls, a younger Brother stands before thee,
In a King's Favour, and a Father's Heart.

Thr. Hence, Insolence! thou know'st that Heav'n
and Nature
Have giv'n me Pow'r to scorn thy pigmy Boasts,
And, by my Birthright, plac'd me in the Rank
Of thy Superiors: Vain presumptuous Stripling!
Know, I've the Pref'rence o'er thee ev'ry way.

Hon. Such was the Pref'rence Heav'n bestow'd on
Gundric;
But *Genferic*, like me, his Father's Favourite,
By him supported, could with Smiles look down
On his resenting Rival's harmless Envy:
Whilst Heav'n, at length repenting of its work,
Rais'd him above that elder Brother's reach.

Thr. Are these the Hopes that flatter thy Ambition?
No more vain Boastings; to the Field of Honour
Adjourn the Contest; let our Swords decide,
Who best deserves the Pref'rence, Thou or I?
Maintain the Glories that thy Pride assum'd;
Shew how thou soar'st above me, make it out,
Or else retract thy Error with thy Shame,
And own the Coward, and thy borrow'd Plumes:
Come, let us try if Heav'n will now repent.

Hon. With joyful Confidence I meet the Challenge.
But see, the Princess! I avoid her now,

For

The IMPERIAL CAPTIVES. 45

For certain Reasons; we may meet again.

[*Ex. Hon.*

Thr. I'll follow thee; and Fate shall now determine
Whose Cause is worthiest, whose the happiest Arm?

[*Going out.*

Enter Eudofia.

Eud. Oh! whither do you fly, my *Thrasimond*?
Turn back, turn back, and ease *Eudofia's* Pain:
Assure me thou art true, that still thou lov'st.

Thr. What reason has my Princess to distrust it?

Eud. I know I ought not to distrust thy Truth.
What tho' thy cruel Father harshly dooms,
Another should be happy in thy Arms,
Yet sure my *Thrasimond* can ne'er comply
With this Injustice to *Eudofia's* Love!
No! to suspect thee, is not to deserve thee.

Thr. To tell my doubting Fair how much I love,
Gestures are weak, and Eloquence is cold;
Judge by his Actions, of the Man that loves you,
Let them speak for me, them confirm my Truth;
Ev'n now the Coward precious Moments fly,
That should be all laid out for Love and thee.

Eud. Where would you run? see, see, my Mother's
here!

Thr. Gods! still another Bar to my Revenge?

Enter Empress.

Emp. You seem displeas'd, my Lord, and in your
Looks

Glare fiercest Rage: What can disquiet you?
You that are set above the rest of Men,
On a fair Mount of rich encircl'ing Honours,
As Favourite of Heav'n, and Pride of Earth:
Your Father's *Africk* is in full Repose,

Both

46 *The IMPERIAL CAPTIVES.*

Both foreign and intestine Dangers curb'd;
The neighb'ring Princes dread his powerful Arms,
They court his Friendship with submissive Offers,
And bribe him with the Wealth of half their King-
doms:

With prosp'rous Gales his Vessels reach the Port,
And pour the *Eastern* Treasures at his Feet.

Can you, the Son of Empire, then have Cause
To frown, when such unnumber'd Glories wait you,
As *Indian* Monarchs on the rising Sun,
And emulate each other to adorn you?
And to compleat your Joys when *Hymen's* Torch
Prepares to light you to the nuptial Bed?

Thr. Sooner let all Mankind be arm'd against me,
I'll stand the Shock; sooner shall these Hands
Tear out my Heart, and cast the Traitor from me,
Than I consent to be the Wretch they'd make me;
Blaspheme the glorious Object of my Vows,
And forfeit the rich Center of my Hopes.
Madam, I could no longer, if I would,
Conceal this Secret, of my faithful Flame,
And her who blew it up: Can you forgive
The Rashness of a Prince, that dares aspire
To your fair Daughter's Love? Or will you now
Improve this Opportunity of Vengeance,
And for the Father, crush the suffering Son?
If so, behold my Bosom, strike, my Fate
Will be too glorious, when I fall by you,
A bleeding Victim at my Princess's Feet.

Emp. To talk so, is to charge me with a Vice,
That never found Abode in *Roman* Breast.
Bound by an equal Duty, to repay
An Obligation, as revenge a Wrong,
I know thy Value, and have heard thy Love,
And whilst I give my Daughter to thy Wishes,
So much the Merit of thy Virtue weighs,
I scarce agree to think the Balance just,
And blush to find my self thy Debtor still.

Thr.

Thr. Oh! what Injustice do you offer here!
Who but your self could justify the Crime,
To put my blushing Merit in the Scale,
With Beauties, full Reward for fighting Gods?
What have I done, another would not do?
What have I done that's worthy of my Cause?
Such Charms t' inspire, such Glories to requite me!
Or oh! against a Father and a King,
What! can I thus a Slave to Duty dare?
Gods! were your Bonds put on by other Lords,
That *Thrasimond* might arm without a Guilt!

Emp. Partake this Ardour which your self inspir'd,
Daughter, Love only is by Love repaid.

Thr. If you obey the Empress, think you raise
A Mortal to a God: You give those Joys,
Would make me look on Perils, Toils, and Death,
With elevated Heart, and pleas'd Disdain!
Charm'd with *Elyzian* Paradise in view,
Vent'rous I'd dare a thousand *Stygian* Lakes,
And leave my Fears to shiv'ring Crowds behind;
But give me your Commands, and they are done:
What's Opposition to surmounting Love?

Eud. Alas! 'gainst *Genferic* what can be done?
Arm'd with the Names of *Father* and of *King*,
The Aid Love proffers, Duty still controuls.

Thr. My Princess, no! I'll serve you uncontroul'd;
Your Eyes that prompt, can authorize my Crimes;
Love is my God, let those who feel his Sway,
Excuse the mighty Pow'r he shews by me:
Madam, this Night your Freedom I engage,
I'll bear you from your Bonds, and *Carthage* too:
I'll animate my Friends to aid your Flight,
Intrepid Men, Strangers to pausing Fear,
That grudge no Toils, when *Thrasimond's* their
Leader:

Narbal shall wait you at th' appointed Hour:
I go—— mean while beware,

Our

48 *The IMPERIAL CAPTIVES.*

Our Looks prove not Betrayers of our Purpose.

[*Exit.*

Eud. Oh! *Thrasimond*, I feel I love thee now!
By this severe Anxiety of Soul,
By all this rising Tenderness, that checks,
And spreads a chilling Damp, o'er all my Hopes,
I fear thy Danger, whilst I wish my Freedom;
And rather let me groan in Bondage still,
Than from the hazard of thy Life, derive
Unwelcome Liberty, and fully'd Joys!

Emp. Needless Alarms! when arbitrary Fortune,
Constant in changing, shifts her fickle Scene,
Informs us, she is tired with torturing on;
To dissipate the darker Clouds she spread,
Salutes us with a fairer Prospect now.

Sophronia comes, 'tis fitting we engage
Her seasonable Aid in our Designs;
By *Hon'rick* slighted, by the King betray'd,
She'll join with willing Heart, in all our Schemes,
And make her Int'rest in the People ours.

Enter Sophronia.

Soph. Forfaken as I am, I come not now
To vent the Taunts of Jealousy on you;
In spite of my Dishonours, view me still,
No fierce resenting Rival, but a Friend;
I have bewail'd your Mis'ries long, and now
Would have you take th' Advantage of your Fate;
I would assist my perjur'd *Honoric's* Flame,
And, for your sake, would sue in his Behalf.
Consent to make him happy, as the Means
To make your own Misfortunes short; oh! weigh
The Benefits Compliance will obtain,
The Danger a Denial will incur!
The King is ever resolute in Vengeance,
If now provok'd, I dread the dire Event!

Emp. We

The IMPERIAL CAPTIVES. 49

Emp. We owe these kind Professions of your Friendship

And Zeal to our unhappy Fortune much;
But ease your Fears, you need not, I assure you,
Distrust a Rival here; the Tyrant's Son,
Honoric, may still be faithful, and your own;
I'll ne'er degenerate below my self,
Nor, in whatever Forms they sternly menace,
Will I be aw'd by Dangers, to consent
To mix the Blood of *Genferic* with *Cæsar's*.

Soph. Is *Thrasimond* a Stranger to that Blood
That makes his Brother odious? No, there is
A Difference, there is a Line that parts them
In your Affections; *Thrasimond* himself
Has told me all, and 'tis in vain for you
To study to conceal his plighted Joy:
Mov'd by a Flame so tender, and so true,
I swear to join in ought to set you free:
Madam, this Day shall shew how much I'll dare,
To be reveng'd on an ungrateful Man.

Emp. If *Thrasimond* has told you his Success,
He told you what was true, and well deserv'd;
His Generosity of Soul spoke for him;
His Mercy on our abject State extended,
When all could spurn the wretched, but himself,
Oblig'd the scanty and too mean Reward;
All he has done for us at *Rome*, and here,
Declare him worthy of my Daughter's Heart:
Worthy to fill my great Forefather's Throne:
And could I with my Daughter give him that,
I'd count it as my Pride, to have reviv'd
The dwindled Glories of degenerate *Rome*.

Soph. 'Tis well; I know my Rival then at last!

Emp. Madam, your Friends are powerful and many,
And may assist Prince *Thrasimond's* Designs:
This Night for our Escape.

H

Soph.

50 *The IMPERIAL CAPTIVES.*

Soph. Then where's *Sophronia*?
Abandon'd, left behind, and lost for ever!
It must not be! (*Aside*) Yes, Madam, you shall see
How I will use the Man that has despis'd me:
His proud Refusal of my proffer'd Love,
Shall cost him dear.

Emp. Be silent; here's the King!

Enter Genferic, Aspar, &c.

Soph. Silent, when barefac'd Treasons are avow'd!
I an Accomplice! You are betray'd, my Lord!
Conspiracies are brooding too too near you!
Who the Fomenters, but your beautiful Captives?
And who the rebel Leader, but your Son?
This Night he vows to shake off his Allegiance,
And bear these Pris'ners from his Father's Chains.

Emp. Distraction! all is ruin'd! [*Aside.*

Eud. Oh! my Fate! [*Aside.*

Soph. No doubt, to prove the fierceness of his
Love,
And sate their Lust of Vengeance, he agreed
To ev'ry Term propos'd, with ready Guilt;
Nor in the trait'rous Consult spar'd your Life.

[*Ex. Soph.*

Gen. Yes, we suppose our Life must be the Price
That your Resentments ask. We thank ye, Gods!
Who have defeated all the Villain's Hopes,
And sav'd us from the threaten'd impious Stroke!
Go, find the Traitor out, secure his Person;
And if he offers to resist, dispatch him.

[*Ex. Capt. of the Guard.*

Eud. Inhuman Monster! [*Aside.*

Emp. Genferic, Is this
The suiting Conduct of so great a King,
To yield a dangerous Belief so soon,

The IMPERIAL CAPTIVES. 51

To this mad, slighted, vengeful Woman's Tale?
No, Sir, I tell you 'tis a false Alarm,
My Daughter has a *Roman* Soul, like me,
And is not to be bought by him who makes
His Parricide a Merit to her Love.

Re-enter Aspar.

Asp. Your Orders are obey'd, the Prince is seiz'd;
Chylax the Captain of your Guard surpriz'd him,
Encounter'd with his Brother.

Gen. O the finish'd Villain!
What! do his daring Treasons spread so far,
And will he strike at all his Line at once?
But say, was *Honoric* safe?

Aspar. Disarm'd, but yet unhurt.

Gen. Thank Heav'n for that!
But for this Stain, this Blot to all our Race,
This most consummate Traitor of a Son,
The sharpest, fiercest Torments are too weak.
Load him with double Chains, and in a Dungeon
Shew him the Image of his future Hell:
(His Crimes would fully the fair Face of Day,
And make the abhorring Sun draw back his Beams;)
Whilst we in Council meditate a Sentence,
If possible, proportion'd to his Guilt:
His Execution's fixt before we sleep;
You, Madam, who seduc'd him to this height
Of Sin, and prompted his Rebellion; you
Shall be the chief Spectator of my Justice,
Assist my Vengeance with those guilty Eyes,
Sharpen each Pang, and give th' expiring Traitor,
In his last Gasps, an Earnest of Damnation.
Then learn to trifle with a Monarch's Rage.

[*Ex. Gen. &c.*

Emp. Go, Monster! challenge all thy *Africk* round,
The glorious Range of arbitrary Brutes!

52 *The IMPERIAL CAPTIVES.*

To shew a Brute more savage than thy self.
If Curses can o'ertake thee, thou hast mine,
With Rage unlimited, and ample weight.

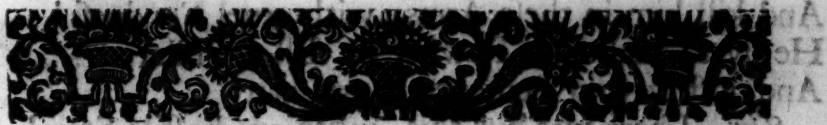
[*Ex. Emp.*
Eud. He's lost! he's lost, for ever, and for ever,
To these expecting Arms, that stretch in vain
To clasp my Hero round! for me he dies!
Perfidious, base *Sophronia*! Tyrant King!
But wherefore do I rave, when Words but injure
The fierce Confusion of my tortur'd Brain?
And shall I be upbraided with his Fall?
Choak me, my Sorrows, let us die together.

I'll fly, I'll fly, and meet my suff'ring Lord!
One Sentence shall to both one Fate afford!
And since our Stars are purpos'd to destroy,
We'll baulk their Malice, and our Pangs enjoy:
We'll make the Bed of Death the Bed of Love,
And shame those adverse Gods we could not move.

The End of the Fourth Act.



ACT



ACT V.

SCENE, A Prison.

Thrasimond, and an Officer.

Off. *Enter* Lord, I grieve to tell you, that this

M Hour,

Enter You must resolve to die; behold the

Mandate,

Sign'd by your Father's Hand!

Thr. I doubt it not:

I've known the Gods and *Genseric* too well;

Let me not blame 'em now; for this Dispatch

Is some atoning Kindness to my Fate;

I would be swept from Earth without a Thought;

Nor give my slumb'ring Passions time to wake;

And shiver at the doubtful, distant Stroke:

Let guilty Wretches, and *Plebeian* Souls,

Cling on the joyless Precipice of Life,

And tremble on the Racks of Hope and Fear;

I scorn to fondle the precarious Moments,

And envy Death the Glory of a Conquest.

(*Eudofia entering, Thrasimond starts!*)

Eud. Where is he? Neither Bars, nor Guards shall
hide him from me!

Our

54 *The* IMPERIAL CAPTIVES.

Our Mis'ries may obtain one last Embrace;
I'll do the dreadful Office of the Wheel,
And kill him in these Arms, with cruel Fondness!
He lives! malicious Pow'rs, be still a while,
And justify your Sentence if you can!

Thr. There was but this, ingenious hostile Stars!
That could reduce me to a Man again.
But now, I soar'd to Liberty and Bliss!
Uninterrupted Bliss! and happier Worlds!
And now the Dream's dissolv'd, and Hell's before me.
Why, my fair Love! why thus severely kind?
Dost thou come here to rouse me to Despair,
Revive each Pang of Wretchedness within me,
Recal my settled Spirits to Confusion,
And aid the Horrors of embitter'd Death?

Eud. Am I so shocking to thee! but indeed,
I have deserv'd the worst thy Wrongs can call me.
'Tis I, not *Genferic*, have pass'd thy Doom!
I fix the Wheel, and sluice thy bleeding Veins!
Upbraid me, do; and I will bless thy Justice.
Wither this fatal mischief-making Face!
Curs'd be this Beauty! this alluring Ruin,
That drew thy stagger'd Virtue to Destruction!
And yet I lov'd thee: Tho' you think me still,
The Cause of thy Undoing, yet I nurs'd
These guiltless guilty Beauties, but for thee:
With thee, the Sun that cheer'd 'em, shall they die.

Thr. Gods! Cut me off this Moment, balance all
Your Tyrannies, with that one Act of Mercy!
I am unworthy this prodigious Proof
Of your vast Power to punish. Oh, *Eudofia*!
By all our mutual Agonies, I swear,
Thou— (must I say it!) art my greatest Foe!
But save me from my present Wounds, I'll count
Flames, Racks, and murd'ring Engines, Beds of
Down.

Off. My

The IMPERIAL CAPTIVES. 55

Off. My Lord, When Death's appointed Hour's
so nigh,
Lose not the few remaining Minutes thus.

Thr. Lose them not! No, I will employ 'em here!
I tell thee, Slave, those Tortures are for Children.
Bafely I wrong'd my Father and the Gods,
To say it was unkind to send thee here;
To fall attended by fuch costly Tears,
Suff'ring for thee, and thus by thee bemoan'd,
Is glorious Torture, and a Death for Princes.

Eud. Ha! Death, again that Sound! alas! what
is it!

Daggers to th' Heart! and Thunder to the Ear!
A sad, eternal Separation's in it!
Where are our Hopes, our Wishes, and Desires!
That met each other with a mutual Heat,
And flatter'd us with Ages of sweet Transport!
All shorten'd by the sweeping Scythe of Death,
And stinted to a doubtful Minute's Space?

Thr. Then let us lay this Minute out with Pru-
dence,
And give it all to Love: I should have said,
To Love's severest Task, and learn to part,
As fuch unhappy, faithful Lovers ought.

Eud. Were we to do indeed as Lovers ought,
Together should we brave the Bolt of Fate,
Lock'd in each other's fond Embraces; thus
Lay down the Burthen of encumbring Life,
In the extatic Struggle, unregretted.

Thr. A little longer, and I shall be quite
That Coward Fate would wish me: Oh! forbear!
Each Look, each Word, each Touch of Kindness
from thee,
Unnerves me, melts me to th' Assaults of Fear,
And almost makes me grow in Love with Life.

Eud. And who would take it from thee? What!
thy Father!

Ha!

56 *The IMPERIAL CAPTIVES.*

Ha! must thou die, attempting to restore
To me, that Freedom thou hast lost thy self!
I cannot bear it! no! I yet will save thee,
If all the wretchedness of prostrate Grief
Can have the least Effect; if Tears, or Pray'rs,
Can gain on thy Barbarian Father's Heart,
I'll sooth him to Humanity; he shall
Retract his Sentence, and forgive his Son:
Or if nought else can fate his curs'd Design,
But Blood, I'll flake his horrid Thirst with mine.

[*Ex. Eud.*

Thr. Farewel, my Love! I know th' Attempt is
vain,

And will embrace this Opportunity,
Of cutting short the thousand thousand Pangs
Of parting, all the fierce reluctant Strugglings,
That make this Death the dreaded Guest he is.
Come, lead me to the Scaffold, where my Soul
Must work her Way thro' Tortures, to her Free-
dom: Your Expedition will be welcome now.

[*Exeunt.*

Scene changes to the Palace.

Enter Sophronia and Justina.

Soph. Where am I? Where's the King? Where's
Thrasimond?

Distraction! Horror! Hell! what have I done?
Oh the rash Act! Oh most abandon'd Woman!
Impeach'd my Love! and doom'd him to the Rack!
Where shall I fly, to skreen me from my self,
And bury the Reflection of my Guilt?
Fatal Resentment! Oh severe Event!
Oh *Thrasimond!* my Love was all my Crime,
I fear'd to lose thee, therefore have destroy'd thee!

Curs'd

The IMPERIAL CAPTIVES. 57

Curs'd female Rashness! whilst my false Revenge
Recoils with double Fury on my self:
Justina see, shroud me as eternal Darkness!
A pale, a bleeding Spectre glides before me,
Rolling his ghastly Eye-balls full on mine,
As he would say, *Sophronia* is my Murderer!
Where is the King? Why name I him? The King
Has not one human Virtue in his Soul:
Nay, even now's impatient till the Deed,
The horrid Deed's accomplish'd, and he gluts
With filial Blood his unappeas'd Barbarity!
Just. Madam, the King is here; some new Alarm
Glooms on his angry Brow with fierce Surprise.

Enter Genferic.

Gen. All *Carthage* is in Arms; the mut'nous Crowd,
Under the Colour of your Name, presume
To countenance Rebellion, and demand
The Traitor *Thrasimond's* devoted Life;
Basely confound your Interest with his,
And say he dies for vindicating you,
From the Injustice of our broken Vows.
This is th' opprobrious Language of the Curs
That bark at Pow'r, but I will soon chastize
Their Insolence, and let my Thunder loose
On ev'ry Rebel Head: *Sophronia*, first
Go you, and shew the Rabble their Mistake;
Pronounce a general Pardon, in my Name,
Upon a quick Return to their Obedience.
But if they dare persist, let *Hon'ric* shew
The Terror of our Arms, and make the Slaves
That flight our Mercy, tremble at our Sword.
Ha! are you mute? Do you approve their Treasons?
Obey my Orders, or I'll use e'en thee
As a Confederate, and a Trait'ress too.

58 The IMPERIAL CAPTIVES.

Soph. Well, Tyrant! dost thou make a full Return
For my rash Loyalty and foolish Honour?
Do you suspect me? Have I then secur'd
Thy tott'ring Throne, to be distrusted now?
Unravell'd all thy Enemies Cabals,
Murder'd thy Godlike Son, and damn'd my self,
To be accus'd as an Accomplice now?
But thou at last instruct'st me how to do
Justice to *Thrasimond*, my Self, and Thee.

[*Ex. Soph.*]

Gen. This Woman's Temper puzzles and confounds
My nicest Politicks: Methought her Words
Swell'd with a doubtful Meaning; 'tis not fit
We leave this dangerous Spirit unobserv'd.

(*Gen. going out meets Eudofia.*)

Eud. Where go you? Stay, oh stay, inhuman
King!
Do not delight in Murder; spare your Son!
I am the Criminal, on me take Vengeance.
'Tis Justice; drench your Hands in hostile Blood,
But do not, do not stain them with your own.
Behold! the Daughter of an Emp'ror sues!
The Line of *Theodosius* deigns to kneel!
Would you be Great and Glorious? Think on Mercy!
Mercy! the brightest Diadem of Empire!
Mercy! that does distinguish Men from Brutes!
And Kings that use it right, from common Men!
Say, *Gens'ric*, say that you revoke his Doom,
And *Thrasimond* shall live!

Gen. Off, *Syren*! off.
I am above thy Arts; By *Jove*, he dies.
No more; but thank my Mercy thou surviv'st him.
Eud. But save him, I forgive thee all the Wrongs
Offer'd our injur'd House.

[*Shouting without.*]

Gen. Ha! whence this Shout?

Eud. Ha!

The IMPERIAL CAPTIVES. 59

Eud. Ha! dost thou start! it is a guilty Shout!
And oh! my sympathizing Heart suggests,
That it proclaims the Murder of thy Son!
And see, the bloody Tyding-bearer comes!
Now, Tyrant! glut thee with the horrid News!
[*She swoons.*]

Enter Aspar hastily.

Asp. Arm, arm, my Lord, the Torrent rises high!
Sophronia animates the rebel Croud,
Prince *Thrasimond's* releas'd, and at their Head!
Your Guards are beat, and *Honoric* is slain!
Be reconcil'd to *Thrasimond*, nought else
Can quell the Tumult, and preserve your Crown.

Gen. Perdition! all my Pride at once o'erthrown,
And shall I cringe to this seditious Herd!
And with extorted Mercy bless this Traitor Son!

Let their Arms thunder at my Palace-Gate,
I'll be a Monarch still in spite of Fate:
Thus weaken'd I will yet defend my Throne,
For Kings are guarded by themselves alone;
Rather than poorly quit the Regal Sway,
Add to the Tempest that I cannot lay.

[*Ex. Gen. and Asp.*]

Eud. (*Raising her self up*)

Why wake I? wherefore could I not for ever
Shut out the hated Day? Since he, alas!
That added to its Lustre is no more!
And must I number Death among my Foes!
Was he so nigh me, and at last withdrew,
As loth to bring his ghastly Comfort yet!

Enter Empress.

Emp. Rise, Daughter, Sorrows are untimely now,
And Tears ungrateful, the revolving Tide

60 *The IMPERIAL CAPTIVES.*

Of flowing Fortune is again our own;
 You mourn the Prince in vain; he lives, and flies
 Swift at a willing Army's Head to save thee:
 Snatch'd from th' impending Stroke of Death, his
 Name,

Thro' the loud Trumpet of exulting Crowds,
 Swells in the Air, and pierces to the Skies.

[*A mixt Shout is heard of Thras. and Soph.*
 And hear, the Sound's repeated!

Eud. 'Tis indeed!
 And yet methinks 'tis ominous, *Sophronia!*
 Was not her hated Name repeated too?
 And wafted upwards in one blended Shout?

Enter Sophronia and Narbal.

Nar. At length the great Event of Battle's o'er,
 By his own Crime perfidious *Gens'ric's* dead.
 When, by his Presence aw'd, his duteous Son
 Check'd his impatient Friends uplifted Arms,
 And bid the War stand still; upon his Knees
 With pious Rev'rence fell, as he disown'd
 The Conquest he had won, and humbly begg'd
 Those Terms, that by Success he might command:
 Strait on his prostrate Son, with double Rage,
 Th' implacable revengeful Father rush'd,
 And aim'd a guilty Dagger at his Heart;
 But Heav'n, the watchful Guardian of the Good,
 Miss'd the erring Weapon's Point, and turn'd
 The Death he doom'd his Son, upon himself:
 Shock'd at the horrid Act, the raging People
 Breath'd on the Instant, with one Voice, *Revenge!*
 And at th' Alarm as soon the Monster fell.

Soph. Now, Prince, I hope I have aton'd my
 Rashness;
 Nor shall my Bosom longer glow in vain,
 With jealous Scorchings, and tormenting Wishes,
 But

The IMPERIAL CAPTIVES. 61

But find at last, my well-deserv'd Return.
 Ha! Is that Sorc'refs here! by Heav'n, her Eyes
 Ferment the Wounds of Jealousy anew,
 And chafe each vanish'd Torture to fresh Madness!
 I know her by the Tumult of my Blood,
 That swells with Rival Hatred at her Sight.
 But what should I distrust, since *Thrasimond*,
 By Gratitude and Honour, is my own!
 Let me indulge the Woman, let me plague her
 With taunting Triumphs, and insulting Joy;
 I'll talk of the dear Prince, since hers no longer;
 I'll mortify her Pride ten thousand ways;
 Extol his ev'ry Charm, and give her all
 That Hell of Torments I endur'd so long.

Eud. Madam, I see an envious Pleasure smiles
 On your big Brow, that you can now upbraid me,
 That whilst I only had the Pow'r to mourn
 The direful Sentence of my absent Lord,
 To you I owe his Rescue and his Life.

Soph. Poison destroy th' insinuating Witch!
 Does she expect I rescu'd him for her?
 To aid her Passion, and assist her Transports?
 He comes! the lovely Royal Charmer comes!
 And looks as ev'ry Deity had join'd,
 To dress their Fav'rite with distinguish'd Brightness;
 Majestically terrible as *Mars*,
 Yet soft and graceful as the Queen of Love.

Enter Thrasimond running and embracing Eudofia.

Thr. My Life! my Soul! *Eudofia!* my fond Arms
 Open spontaneous to receive thee home,
 And strain thee to my Heart! I fear I shall
 Grow impious in my Joy, and quite forget
 The dreadful Price this sully'd Pleasure costs,
 My Royal Father's and my Brother's Blood!
 Unnatural as they were, my Kindred still!

Soph.

62 The IMPERIAL CAPTIVES.

Soph. Furies and Scorpions! I am torn to pieces,
And Hell is an *Elyzium*, if compar'd
With half the Frenzy of my present Pains!
Yes, I have conquer'd to a noble Purpose,
To bless my Rival, and to sink my self
To the extreamest Depth of burning Woe!
Do you, at last, vouchsafe a Look on me!
It is, I must confess, a kind Return
For Life, for Love, for Liberty, and Empire,
Restor'd by me! ungrateful, barb'rous Wretch!

Thr. Madam!

Soph. Nay, do not varnish o'er thy Baleness,
With all the treach'rous Rhetoric of Words:
I know my self and thee too plainly now!
I know I have been bounteous to a Serpent,
That thankless bites its Benefactor first!
I know for whom I live to be despis'd!
But think not my proud Rival e'er shall reap
What never could be mine! thus, lovely Traitor!
Since then in Life we never could be join'd,
Death shall unite; this Minute ends us both!

[*She first stabs Thrasimond, and then her self.*]

Thr. What could provoke this Rashness! my own
Wound

Is slight, but to thy Breast, unhappy Maid!
The Dagger carry'd a too fatal Point!
She faints! the Blood forsakes her lifeless Cheek!
Support her! fly for Aid!

Soph. 'Tis needless all.

I feel the thrilling Guest thro' ev'ry Vein!
My Death is just for my Attempt on thee!
Forgive me, *Thrasimond*, and thank'd be Heav'n,
The Dagger only enter'd where it should.
Oh Prince! if I have lov'd thee with a Flame,
Beyond the nice Restraints of Virgin's Love,
It was the Fault of Fate, and not *Sophronia*! [*Dies.*]

Thr. Not

The IMPERIAL CAPTIVES. 63

Thr. Not to allow thy hapless Fall a Tear,
Were barbarous indeed! Peace to thy Maiden Shade.

Emp. Bloody Effect of Passion!

Eud. Fatal Deed!

Thr. Yet ev'n amidst the Horrors of this Day,
When I look here, a Gleam of Brightness dawns
Thro' the deep Gloom, auspicious to my Love.

[*Taking Eudofia by the Hand.*

Emp. Her Mother thus confirms your promis'd
Joys.

Thr. Let me receive them thus, from Heav'n and
You.

[*Kneeling.*

I know beyond the Bliss of Monarchs now;
With joyless Heart I mount my Father's Throne,
My truest Empire is in Thee alone.

F I N I S.



THE IMPERIAL CATHEDRAL

For Not to allow thy sacred light to
Wear darkness indeed! Hence to thy Mother's Shrine
Ramp, bloody light of Passion!
For, Father, I
Thee, Yet even amidst the horrors of this Day,
When I look back a Gloom of Night's gloom
Thine, the deep Gloom, auspicious to my Love,
[Looking backward to the Past]
And, for I see thus confirm your promise
[Looking forward to the Future]
Let me receive them thus, from Heav'n and
You
I know beyond the Bliss of Mortals now,
With joy's light I mount my Father's Throne,
My realm's temple is in Thine alone.

4 AP 54



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